CONNECTING SACRED AND SCHOLASTIC COMMUNITIES: EVANGELIZING AND DISCIPLING AFRICAN AMERICAN MALES ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES

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ABSTRACT

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MALES ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES

by

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United Theological Seminary, 2010

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The initial problem the researcher sought to address was the lack of African American male college students attending Elon First Baptist Church. While the church was in walking distance to the university, African American male students were not attending. The hypothesis was that the church was not providing relevant ministry toward African American male college students. The treatment to improve the relevance of ministry toward African American male students included weekly formation groups, internships, strategic evangelism and community programming. Within an eight week period, the church greatly improved its ability to minister and attract African American male college students.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The researcher of this work wishes to thank God whom makes all things possible. In addition, the researcher is forever grateful to Elon First Baptist Church for their spirit of determination to make a difference through good news and good works. The researcher would also like to thank the staff members and faculty members of Elon University. The researcher is forever indebted to his family and friends for their unfailing support and love. A special thanks is extended to Marceo Keith McDaniel Jr. and Madison Nicole McDaniel, the children of the researcher; Timothy Hart (Brother), and Itia Hart (sister in-law). Special thanks are also extended to the researcher's mother and father Branelisa Hart and Silas Hart. Finally, I want to thank Dr. Sir Walter Mack Jr., Dr. Harry White and Dr. Eric Greaux for their guidance and wisdom.

ABBREVIATIONS

KJV	King James Version
EFB	Elon First Baptist

THE INTRODUCTION

In Chapter One of this work, the researcher outlines his spiritual journey and ministry context. It was the dominant role of pastors in his life that helped him realize that pulpit ministry is not the total extent of pastoral ministry. Within, Chapter One of this work, the researcher describes how this realization helped him to discover the ministry need of his immediate community. African American males were not attending Elon First Baptist, the church in which the researcher serves as pastor. As a result, the researcher desired to create a program that would extend his pastoral ministry outside the pulpit in an effort to be a spiritual and social influence in the lives of young African American men, similar to the way in which pastors had influenced his life.

In Chapter Two of this work, the researcher begins to identify the social implications of why such a ministry focus is needed. The social issues that make this ministry project a necessity include; lower retention rates of African American male college students, prison rates of African American males and the economic depression of the African American community. The researcher outlines the need to evangelize, disciple and educate the African American male because the hope for the African American community is linked to the success and survival of its men. Within Chapter two, the researcher identifies some possible reasons why African American males are not present in church and gives a review of the literature on post-modern evangelism and

discipleship in hopes of building the case toward connecting the sacred and the scholastic community.

In Chapter Three, the researcher lays the theoretical, historical, theological and biblical foundations for this ministry focus. The theoretical foundation of this work centers on developing leadership for effective programming in the post-modern generation. Within this chapter, the researcher details the need to create new models of ministry. The theoretical assumption that supports this ministry project is that humanity is created in the image of God. Connecting sacred and scholastic communities for the purpose of creating an evangelism and discipleship program for African American male college students is one of the many ways in which educated African American men claim a healthy identity and tap into their innermost spiritual resource. Within this chapter the researcher uses the historical voices of St. Augustine and W.E.B Du Bios as a foundation, while drawing on several passages of scripture to build both the biblical and theological basis for this ministry project.

In Chapter Four, the researcher outlines the project design and the methodology used to test the result of the program. The researcher hypothesized that the reason why African American males were not coming to the church was because the church had not done enough to prove itself relevant to their academic journey. As a result, the researcher designed a program to explore the reasons why African American males were not attending his church. Secondly, the researcher wanted to determine if the students could see the importance of connecting with a church while attending college. Finally, the researcher wanted to determine if the church could become a relevant extension of the learning process. In order to test the hypothesis, the project and the outcome of the

project, a qualitative methodology was selected. In Chapter Four, the researcher outlines the goal of qualitative research.

In Chapter Five, the researcher gives a week-by-week view of what happened during the implementation of the program. In addition to outlining the weekly events and happenings within the program, the researcher gives a complete data analysis and the outcome of the program. The program was a success; however, it was not without challenge and difficulty. The researchers outline both the successes and the challenges of the program in Chapter Five.

In Chapter Six the researcher gives an in-depth summary of the program. The summary includes, insight gained, presumptions challenged and lessons learned as a result of the program. This program has changed the heart of the researcher as well as the congregation. Within the pages of Chapter Six the researcher outlines some of the things that should have been tried differently during the program and offers some suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER ONE

MINISTRY FOCUS

The ministry focus this project sought to address is associated with evangelizing and discipling African American males on college campuses. The ministry focus was born out of a challenge that was two-fold challenge. First, African American males from Elon University were not attending Elon First Baptist Church, a church located within walking distance to the University. Secondly, the need to create a nurturing community for African American males was presented to the researcher by the student body in an effort to encourage them in their academic pursuit. As a result, the project sought to connect the sacred community of the church and the scholastic community of the university in such a way that African American males were evangelized.

This ministry focus serves as an example of providing leadership for effective programming in the post-modern generation. Leadership in a post-modern generation must take into account the great blessing of community partnership. The church must be willing to partner with others institutions within the community for the betterment of all people. Secondly this ministry focus serves as an example of effective leadership; it takes into account that persons from a post-modern culture are attracted to ministries that are need based. Finally, the ministry focus is an example what particular ministry can be. Persons from a post-modern culture ask questions, and are looking for answers. They are looking for particular as well as theological solution to life's dilemma. Furthermore, they

may not expect answers given in sermonic format if there is no practical means of experiencing a change in their life. As a result, the researcher of this work believes that church leadership, particularly the pastoral office, must a have broader based of influence than a pulpit ministry.

The ministry focus was chosen out of the researcher's desire to extend the role of pastoral ministry and pastoral influence into the areas of spiritual, social, and scholastic development. This desire became rooted within the mind and heart of the researcher because of the way in which pastors influenced the researcher of this document. Three pastors helped to shape the spiritual, social and scholastic framework for the researcher. As a result, this helped him to understand that the role of the pastor is not limited to the spiritual development of persons in community, but it includes the total development of a person's life. This was only realized after careful reflection of his own life and the role that pastors played.

A life without reflection is one void of meaning and purpose. It is God's desire that each human being reflect upon their life. It is in the moment of reflection that humanity is able to examine stewardship, challenges and accomplishments in an effort to discover where and how God has been active in one's life. The researcher of this work, after vigilantly reflecting on both his life and his context, became aware that his research as well as his ministry focus needed to deal with expanding pastoral influenced from the pulpit of the local congregation to the lectern of the local university. This was the direct result of coming into the realization of the enormous impact pastors had on his life.

The researcher was born in the city of Winston-Salem; the fifth largest city in the state of North Carolina, on October 10, 1976. His mother, a teenager, by the name of

Branelsia Kay McDaniel was the youngest of four preacher's kids. She gave birth to the researcher on a Sunday morning. To be more specific, the researcher was born at home. On one occasion, the researcher asked his mother who deliver him, her answer, "God." That Sunday morning his grandmother, Ivey Nelle McDaniel, took both her daughter and her new grandson to the local hospital. Dr. A. H. McDaniel, his grandfather went to church. When he stood to preach that Sunday morning, he announced that his youngest daughter had just delivered a baby boy and that they were both doing fine. Afterwards he began to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. Therefore, the researcher's introduction to the world happened in the moment of preaching. The first person to speak publically for him was his grandfather, his preacher, his pastor, the Rev. A. H. McDaniel. A. H. McDaniel was instrumental in providing a Christian home that nurtured and protected the gift of God which was buried within the heart of the researcher.

While A. H. McDaniel was instrumental in providing a Christian home for the researcher, he was also a major religious leader in the community who understood that evangelism was an essential part of being the church Christ called into being. A. H. McDaniel served as pastor of Union Baptist Church in the city of Winston-Salem, North Carolina for 47years. From 1933-1980, he preached with passion and ministered to the lost. Hundreds of souls were saved and over the years Union Baptist became a major component of spiritual and social renewal in the city. It should be mentioned that when A. H. McDaniel became pastor of Union Baptist, the church only had eight members. The story is often told that the first offering collected under his leadership was $1.50. This amount was exactly enough to pay the week's rent. The church experienced significant growth and achievements under his pastorate to include but not be limited to;

purchasing its first property, erecting a new sanctuary, completing an educational wing and a parking lot expansion in 1975 at a cost of $115,000.[1] This was a giant step forward from a $1.50 offering. Like the Apostle Paul, God wrought miracles through the ministry of A. H. McDaniel.

On December 23, 1980 the researchers grandfather pasted away from prostate cancer. The researcher was only four years old at the time. Despite the fact that A. H. McDaniel pasted away over 20 years ago, it still amazing the researcher that people can still talk about him for hours at a time many years after his death. It is without a doubt that his ministry touched their lives. He was a giant in the ministry and impacted lives in a way that the researcher hopes to duplicate.

The next pastor to play a significant role in the life of the researcher was Rev. Dr. B. F. Daniels. In the tenth month of 1981, Union Baptist called Dr. B. F. Daniels as their next pastor. He would pastor Union Baptist for the next sixteen years. It was under his pastorate, at the age of six that the researcher was baptized into the Christian faith. He gave his life to the Lord after attending a week of vacation Bible school. One of the deacons extended an invitation to Christian Discipleship on the last night of the week. The researcher heard the voice of the Lord and responded to the invitation by walking to the front of the church. What happened next was amazing. Six or seven other children of the same age came to the front of the church. They too desired to know the Lord Jesus Christ.

Sometime later, Rev. Daniels and an associate minister baptized the researcher into the family of God. Reflecting back on this event, the researcher realizes that even at an early age, God was using him to influence others for the glory of God. B. F. Daniels

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[1]Union Baptist Church, "Church History," http://unionbaptistwsnc.org (accessed June 5, 2008).

was extremely influential in the researcher's life. Daniels would often call on the researcher to read scripture or to say a prayer during a worship services while the researcher was very young. His mother would often give him a crash course in pulpit etiquette. She would say things like; "sit up straight, no talking, no playing, and don't fall asleep." Little did the researcher know that these were the first courses he would take in pastoral ministry.

While Rev. Daniels would create opportunities for the researcher to participant in worship, he was also active in areas of the researcher's life outside of church. He helped the researcher get his first job. One of Rev. Daniels, favorite restaurants was an Ice Cream shop called Mayberry's Ice Cream. Dr. Daniels and the manager we're good friends. When the researcher was legally able to work, Rev. Daniels gave him the needed recommendation. Once the manager knew that researcher was a member of Rev. Daniels' congregation, he was hired immediately.

It seems clear to researcher that B. F. Daniels understood that the call to pastor individuals must include being concerned about their development outside the walls of the church. God used B. F. Daniels to bring the researcher into the kingdom of God, by way of baptizing him. However, God also used Daniels to bring the researcher into economic and social awareness by aiding him in getting his first job. By B. F. Daniels offering a recommendation of employment in letter and in person suggested that B. F. Daniel was able to use his influence as pastor to connect a member of his church to economic resources within the community. B. F. Daniels passed in November 1997. However, his legacy of pastoral influence lives on.

The third pastor to influence the development of the researcher was the Rev. Dr. Sir Walter Mack, Jr. In 1999 the Lord blessed Union with its next pastor. Dr. Mack brought a new energy and a new excitement to the congregation. The researcher's first conversation with Dr. Mack took place in the pastoral office of Dr. Mack. When the researcher came into Dr. Mack's office on a Sunday morning and introduced himself as the assigned worship leader for that morning's worship service, his journey to the pastoral ministry began. When Dr. Mack greeted the researcher, the first question he asked him was, "Are you in the ministry?" The researcher answered, no. This was about to change.

Over the course of the next ten months the Lord took the researcher to higher levels of trusting in His voice. He was being called in the gospel ministry. The Rev. Dr. Sir Walter Mack, Jr. was instrumental in helping the researcher discern this call and began to mentor him through his preparation for ministry. As God continued to reveal his will for the life of the researcher, Dr. Mack encouraged him to enter into a season of prayer and fasting. He gave the researcher a book to read during this time. It was a book written by Harold Carter entitled *Myths that Mire the Ministry*. The book focused largely on the role of associate ministers and how that role greatly differs from that of the pastor. This was the first textbook given to the researcher in reference to the ministry and was a symbolic token of the role in which Dr. Mack would play in the researcher's life. Dr. Mack guided him through the process of discerning his call to ministry with a tremendous amount love and support.

Dr. Mack's influence on the researcher's life was such that he helped him discern his call to ministry and the need to prepare for doing it at a professional level. The

researcher's first sermon was preached on July 21, 2001 at Union Baptist Church in the city of Winston-Salem. The title of his first sermon was, *An Unchanging God*! Following his initial sermon, he was licensed as a minister of the gospel. This was the beginning of his preaching career. His ministry at Union included teaching Sunday school classes, leading Bible study groups and teaching family life institute classes on evangelism and theology. While at Union he continued to grow in his understanding of the gospel ministry.

Dr. Mack instilled in the researcher the importance of trained clergy. As a result, the researcher enrolled into Shaw University to complete his undergraduate work. In May of 2003, he graduated with honors with a BA in Religion and Philosophy and a minor in Business Management. Upon completing his degree requirements at Shaw University, the researcher once again met with Dr. Mack concerning his preparation for ministry. Dr. Mack encouraged him to apply to seminary at Duke Divinity School. The researcher did and was accepted into the Master of Divinity program. While at Duke, the researcher had the privilege to study under some of the greatest minds of the 21st century to include Rev. Dr. William C. Turner, Dr. J. Kameron Carter, Dr. Warren Smith, Dr. David Steinmetz and Dr. Tammy Williams. In May of 2007, the researcher graduated from Duke Divinity School. Upon completing Duke Divinity, he completed a continuing education program at Harvard Divinity School and later entered into United Theological Seminary in Dayton, OH at the direction of Dr. Sir Walter Mack, Jr.

Three pastors, A. H. McDaniel, B. F. Daniels and Sir Walter Mack, Jr. all shaped the researcher's prospective of pastoral ministry. A. H. McDaniel gave him the spiritual and evangelistic component of pasturing. B. F. Daniels helped him to understand the role

of pastor and the importance of helping people live better in community. Sir Walter Mack, Jr. helped him transition into ministry through educational preparation. As a result of their influence on his life, the researcher was given a pastoral- model that reached outside of the pulpit ministry. It is this model of pasturing that the researcher seeks to live out as pastor of Elon First Baptist Church, Elon NC. This model of pastoral ministry also provides the framework for this ministry focus.

Elon First Baptist Church is located in the town of Elon, North Carolina. This is a rural community positioned within Alamance County. This county is often described as a *bedroom* community because many of the residents who live within it work in other communities. Historically, the economic thrust of the community was rooted in the textile industry. There were many textile plants spread throughout the county from the 1800's to the mid 20th century. However, many of the textile plants are now closed down. Some of the major employers within the present community include LabCorp, Honda, Alamance Regional Medical Center and Elon University. Many of the members of Elon First Baptist work for these employers.

Elon First Baptist Church is located at 113 Lynn Street in Elon, North Carolina. It's current location is at the very center of the Morgan Place Community. Approximately 60 percent of the churches membership live in this community or have family ties within the community. The Morgan Place Community is within walking distance to Elon University. This is a private liberal arts university a few three blocks down the street. The university is a major part of the town. As a matter of fact, that town was called *Elon College* up until 2001. It was during this same year that the college became a university and the town officially changed its name to *Elon*.

It should be noted that Elon First Baptist Church is the oldest African American congregation within the town of Elon. A former slave named John McMullen founded the church at the turn of the 20th century. The church's first sanctuary was built on his land. Despite the fact that Reverend McMullen was a slave, he is by all accounts remembered as a very intelligent person. The researcher was called to pastor this great church in August 2005. In December of the same year, the church received a new vision and a new mission statement. The vision to which the church now operates is, "A Church Determined to Make a Difference through Good News and Good Works."

Operating under this vision statement, the church began to pursue a holistic approach to ministry. Many new ministries were introduced and implemented and the church began to grow. However, as the church began to grow the leadership of Elon First Baptist identified a problem. African American males from the local university were not attending the Churches' worship services. This was problematic because the church was so close to the university. African American female students from the University attending worship but not the males.

Elon University was founded by the Christian Church (now the United Church of Christ) in 1889. "The local Christian assembly committed themselves to erect an institution for higher learning. In 1889 the establishment relocated an old school known as Graham Normal College to a heavily wooded area full of large oak trees."[2] This group understood that *Elon* was actually Hebrew for *oak*. As a consequence, the name Elon College was given. Today the university functions with a mission to transform mind,

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[2]Elon North Carolina "Town History," http://www.elonnc.com/history/default.asp (accessed October 24, 2008).

body and spirit while encouraging freedom of thought and liberty of conscience.

According to the University website this mission is fulfilled in the following four ways.

A. To nurture a rich intellectual community characterized by active student engagement with a faculty dedicated to excellent teaching and scholarly accomplishment.

B. To provide a dynamic and challenging undergraduate curriculum grounded in the traditional liberal arts and sciences and complemented by distinctive professional and graduate programs.

C. To integrate learning across the disciplines and put knowledge into practice, thus preparing students to be global citizens and informed leaders motivated by concern for the common good.

D. To foster respect for human differences, passion for life of learning, personal integrity, and an ethic of work and service.[3]

It is without question that Elon University is a major institution of higher learning. With steady growth in admissions, Elon University has increased its total student headcount by 42 percent since 1998. According to the registrar's office, the university reported a total of 5,628 students for 2008-2009. Out of that number, 551 students accounted for undergraduate minority students. Out of the 551 minority students, 290 were African American. Out of that number 131 were male. Out of that number only 1 attended Elon First Baptist Church on a regular basis at the start of implementing this ministry focus. As a result, it became clear to the researcher and to the leadership of the church that the African American male student population was not attending worship at Elon First Baptist Church. As a result, the ministry focus was born.

[3]Elon University, "Elon University Mission Statement," http://www.elon.edu/e-web/visit/about_elon.xhtml (accessed August 20th, 2009).

CHAPTER TWO

STATE OF THE ART IN THIS MINISTRY PROJECT

There is a need to evangelize, disciple and educate the African American Male. To use the words of Scott Jones, "To evangelize is one way of bearing witness to what God has done in Christ and is doing through the Holy Spirit today to convey the good news."[1] It is essential that the African American male on the college campus are systematically evangelized. While the chief goal of evangelism is to lead a person into making personal commitment to Christ, discipleship is what nurtures that commitment. Therefore, the ultimate goal of evangelizing is to make disciples. There is a need to evangelize, disciple and educate the African American male because the hope for the African American community is linked to the success and survival of its men.

In 2001, Jawanza Kunjufu wrote a book entitled; *State of Emergency: We Must Save African American Males*. In this book, Kunjufu deals with five major issues that have brought about what he calls a state of emergency concerning the African American Male. The areas that have negatively impacted the African American Males the most, according to Kunjufu are; the miseducation of the African American Male, the economic system, the drug industry, the penal system and fatherlessness. Within this work Kunjufu's frustration with American hypocrisy is revealed. According to Kunjufu, if white America were dealing with the same issues as black American, they would already

[1]Scott J. Jones, *The Evangelistic Love of God & Neighbor* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press 2003), 15.

called for a state of emergency. However, no such alarm had been raised by the nation concerning those citizens who are of a darker hue. As a result, Kunjufu's book serves as a call to realize the plight of the African American male and the African American community.

Within this work, Kunjufu identifies what he believes to be the most critical ages for African American males. For him, the most critical ages for African American males are fifteen to thirty-three. He writes, "If we can find a way to keep our males safe within this age range, we have an excellent chance of saving our families and communities."[2] At the center of this age group is the college student. Most undergraduate college students are between the ages of eighteen and twenty-two. This ministry project is designed to targets African American males who are at the center of a critical age range. Targeting African American males who have entered college is at the center of saving the African American family.

After reviewing the published literature and current events of American African males in this country, it is no question that there is a well-documented case of scholastic disparity. Graduation rates for African American males from institutions of higher education are dramatically lower than most other demographics. A review of published literature and current events give some possible answers. It is apparent that this crisis does not begin when one enters the university but rather it is rooted at a higher level.

The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundations fact Sheet on Race, Ethnicity and Health Care reported in their July 2006 edition that fewer than 8 percent of young African American men have graduated from institutions of higher education. They compared this

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[2]Jawanza Kunjufu, *State of Emergency: We Must Save African American Males* (Sauk Village, IL: African American Images Publishing, 2001), 64.

percentage to 17 percent of whites and 35 percent of Asians who obtained their college degree. This difference has a direct impact on potential income. The same report stated that unemployment rates for a young African American man is over twice the rate for young white, Hispanic and Asian men.

The winter 2007 edition of *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* reported that nationwide the black student college graduation rate remained at a dismally low 43 percent. But the college completion rate had improved by four percentage points over the past three years.[3] The article illuminated the fact that black enrollment in higher education had increased. However, black students were not graduating at acceptable rates. According to the journal, the nationwide college graduation rate for black students was at a, "appallingly low rate of 43 percent." That is to say that less than half of black students enrolled were actually graduating.

Bill Maxwell published an article in 2004 entitled *On Campus, grim Statistics for African-American men*. This article appeared in the St. Petersburg Times Online. In this article he stated that there are two reasons that should cause alarm within the African American community. The first is the low number of black men in college and second, the low number of black men who are graduating from college. The obstacles that govern these two alarms are many. Maxwell offers several possibilities. For him the reasons that cause these alarms are rooted in social issues. He writes, "They include inferior public education before college, the absence of black men as a role models, low expectations from teachers and other adults, low self-esteem, black men's own aspirations and their tendency to drop out of high school in disproportionate numbers." All of which for

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[3]The Journal of Blacks in higher Education, http://www.jbhe.com/preview/winter07preview.html (accessed January 2, 2008).

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Maxwell, serve as challenges in African Americans attending and graduating from College.

Valerie Rawistown Wilson's essay entitled *On Equal ground: Causes and Solutions for Lower College Completion Rates Among Black Males* seems to echo Maxwell's claim. However, she argues that a meaningful discussion of this crisis must move past the statement of obvious facts to an analysis of how differences in social and economic status, family background, and preparation for higher education or lack thereof affect graduation outcomes. She writes, "By observing the factors that contribute to success or failure in college, policymakers can begin to create policies and programs that not only help those already enrolled, but also better prepare students before they enter college."[4]

Her work largely focused on discerning the differing success rates of African American males on Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) and Traditionally White Institutions (TWI) and if indeed there was a different caliber of student who attended these institutions. She writes, "Students who attended TWIs were more likely to be top students in high school than their counterparts at HBCUs, but it is important to keep in mind that top students are more likely to attend the country's elite universities, all of which are classified as TWI."[5] While this may be a reality, this does not answer the question, "Why are African American males student not graduating at an acceptable level?"

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[4]Valerie Rawistown Wilson, "On Equal Ground: Causes and Solutions for Lower College Completion Rates Among Black Males," *The State of Black America 2007*, (Silver Spring, MD: Beckham Publications Group), 124.

[5]Ibid., 126.

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[5]Ibid., 126.

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Valerie Rawistown Wilson's essay entitled *On Equal ground: Causes and Solutions for Lower College Completion Rates Among Black Males* seems to echo Maxwell's claim. However, she argues that a meaningful discussion of this crisis must move past the statement of obvious facts to an analysis of how differences in social and economic status, family background, and preparation for higher education or lack thereof affect graduation outcomes. She writes, "By observing the factors that contribute to success or failure in college, policymakers can begin to create policies and programs that not only help those already enrolled, but also better prepare students before they enter college."[4]

Her work largely focused on discerning the differing success rates of African American males on Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) and Traditionally White Institutions (TWI) and if indeed there was a different caliber of student who attended these institutions. She writes, "Students who attended TWIs were more likely to be top students in high school than their counterparts at HBCUs, but it is important to keep in mind that top students are more likely to attend the country's elite universities, all of which are classified as TWI."[5] While this may be a reality, this does not answer the question, "Why are African American males student not graduating at an acceptable level?"

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[4]Valerie Rawistown Wilson, "On Equal Ground: Causes and Solutions for Lower College Completion Rates Among Black Males," *The State of Black America 2007*, (Silver Spring, MD: Beckham Publications Group), 124.

[5]Ibid., 126.

After Wilson considered the social implications of economic status, family background and preparation, she discovered something that was very interesting to the researcher. Economic status did not prove to negatively impact graduation rates. Her research showed that students in the lowest income category (less than $16,000) were 4.4 percentage points less likely to drop out than those from families with an income above $53,750. "This suggests more determination to remain in school and complete their college education among lower income students."[6] While her research showed that family background had some implications on graduate rates, in that persons from broken or single parent homes were 4.5 percentage points more likely to drop out, this was not the greatest reason why African American males are not graduating from college.

What her research indicted was that success in college begins long before the student enrolls. "A student's performance in the higher education arena is intricately linked to his or her ability to develop the skills necessary to compete and meet the demands of college before they arrive."[7] The researcher of this work completely agrees with her position. There has to be a skill set that is already present within the student before they enter into the college environment to aid in their obtaining the goal of receiving a college degree. However, the researcher of this work has discovered another factor that aid black males in obtaining their college degree, namely, access to a spiritually nurturing community while pursuing the college degree.

African American students and particularity African American male students face many different challenges while pursuing their academic degree. These challenges can create a stressful learning environment. The researcher of this work believes that

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[6]Ibid., 128.

[7]Ibid., 129.

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[6]Ibid., 128.

[7]Ibid., 129.

Christian theology and Christian spirituality can play a significant role in helping African American male college students succeed. A recently published article stated that, "The notion of spirituality positively affecting the lives of African-Americans is a well known ideology."[8] The researcher of this ministry focus also believes that the church is the premier institution of spiritual development and the university being the premier institution of secular development. The combination of these two institution creates what the researcher believes is the best opportunity for human development. As a result, the church must find a way to communicate this truth, even to black males who may have already counted the church as irrelevant to his human development.

In 2008 a group of essays written by noted black authors, scholars, entertainers and community activist were published in a book called *The Black Male Handbook.* The Black Male Handbook is a collection of essays for African American males. All of the essays focus on issues concerning survival, spirituality and being successful. The authors of this work tapped into the social and political climate of the black community, particularly the black male population of that community. The Black Male Handbook provided answers to a shared cry for new direction and new solutions to old problems.

One of the authors, Lasana Omar Hotep did an essay on creating a spiritual foundation for African American males. Within the essay he details his own spiritual journey and how different religions helped to give him a spiritual foundation. According to Hotep, there are black males within society who have become increasingly critical of the church and religion as a whole. He believes that many black males are absent from the church because many ***brothers*** have unresolved issues with God. His essay outlines

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[8]Reginald K. Riggins, CoSandra McNeal, Michael K Herndon, "The Role of Spirituality Among African-American College Mates Attending A Historically Black University," *ProQuest Psychology Journals* (March 2008): 71.

the problems that many black males have with religion and some possible solutions to resolve them.

Despite the hardcore image that many black men portray, they still have a desire to be loved unconditionally by God. The paradox that Hotep describes in his essay is that while they turn to God for unconditional love, they live in a world that is full of the harsh realities of life that plague the black experience. As a consequence, they have not been able to overcome personal anger or frustration with God. They are caught in the theodicy of theology. "Some are wondering where God was when they suffered abuse as little boys, or when they were mistreated as teenagers, or even now, when they are dismissed as shiftless adults–regardless of their personal struggles and/or successes."[9] He also outline that some African American males are struggling with God because of the social issues that are negatively impacting them. He says, "Others wonder where God was when they were being racially profiled by police, discriminated against in the workplace, or even when they found out their lover was cheating on them."[10] Some *brothers*, according to Hotep, take issue with the church because the biblical story is not made relevant to their daily lives.

There were three areas that Hotep outlined in his work that he believed would improve the black male's response to religion. First, the religious institutions were to stop thinking of divinity as limited to the confines of a building. Secondly, they were to stop building faith on the fear of damnation. Finally, they were to stop seeking personal salvation above the good of the whole. He believes that if religious institutions could do

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[9]Lasana Omar Hotep, *Creating A spiritual Foundation: The Black Male Handbook* (New York: NY: Atria Books, 2008), 5.

[10]Ibid.

these three things, "Our community might begin to reverse the trends that have made so many black males distance themselves from religion."[11]The researcher of this work agrees with Hotep to a certain degree.

The researcher of this work agrees with the fact that God is not confined to the church building and therefore ones spirituality should not be confined to the church building. If one professes Christ in the sanctuary, they should also profess Him while living in society. Worship is a way of life. Service is a way of life. Embodying the story of Christ is a way of life. The church, the called out community, the people of God must live out the gospel that they proclaim.

The researcher of this work also agrees with Hotep in that the church should not build faith on the fear of damnation. The researcher of this work believes that faith should be built on the unconditional love of God. One should not be scared into a relationship with God but loved into it. God loves the world and desires that the world love God back. Calvary is the greatest explanation and example of divine love. Jesus said in John 15:13, "No greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Fear of hell should not be the message of the church to motivate persons toward salvation, but rather, the love of God.

Where the researcher of this work differs from Hotep is that the church should stop seeking personal salvation above the good of the whole. Jesus said that Christians, "Are the salt of the Earth: but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored."[12] As it relates to the church, the church must view personal salvation through the resurrected Jesus Christ as the tool that empowers and equips them to do good deeds in

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[11]Ibid., 16.

[12]Mt 5:13 (NRSV)

society. Personal salvation is the foundation for persons to live harmoniously with self, society and Savior. Without a personal relationship with God, one can only have religion. God desires for humanity to have a relationship with God. It is only when a person has developed a personal relationship with God that they better understand the world in which they live and how God is active within it.

The researcher of this ministry focus believes that the African American male on the college campus must be evangelized and ultimately discipled into the story of Jesus Christ. The church and the university must make a connection to create the atmosphere of optimum human development. In order for the church to make an impact in the life of the African American male college student it must be relevant. As a result, the church must use a post-modern approach to evangelize a post-modern person.

Post modernity refers to a movement in the history of ideas. The enlightenment period or modernity was a time that celebrated the idea of absolute knowledge. Graham Johnston, in his book, *Preaching to a Postmodern World* outlined this movement.

> The enlightenment grew to be a period of scientific certainty, human optimism, and the belief in inevitable progress toward a better world. Reason supplanted the role of faith. In modernity, faith and morality were labeled subjective truth and, therefore, were not suitable for discussion in the public arena. People no longer needed to cling to superstitions or even biblical revelation because now, through empirical study and scientific rationalism, one could conclusively determine what was true and real.[13]

Post modernity has abandoned the notion of absolute truth that modernity celebrated. "The enlightenment arrogance sought to provide answers to all questions. Postmodern people simply live in the quandary of not knowing and of potential

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[13]Graham Johnston, *Preaching to a Postmodern World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2002), 25.

meaninglessness."[14] As a result, persons from a postmodern culture are more open-minded. There is no absolute truth in the mind of postmodern people. The church of the postmodern culture must provide ministries that reach person who may or may not subscribe to a particular worldview. To better understand how to evangelize a postmodern generation the researcher of this ministry focus turned to the writings of Brad Kallenberg.

Brad Kallenberg is regarded by many has being a pioneer in engaging the postmodern world with the message of Christ. His work, *Live to Tell, Evangelism for a Postmodern Age* showcases this fact. *Live to Tell,* is a well written book that details the three basic doctrines that modern philosophy has advocated since the mid-seventeenth century. These doctrines as described in his work are generic individualism, representationalism, and propositionalism. Generic individualism, deals with the notion that the individual is always more significant than any larger group of which they may belong to. Representationalism holds to the idea that language is nothing but a picture of the world. "According to representationalism, words and sentences are expendable bearers of more important things called meaning. In this view, truthfulness is measured in terms of a sentence's correspondence with the ways things really are."[15] While propositionalism simply means that belief must be subjected to rigorous testing. "Those beliefs that pass the scrutiny of public accessible criteria qualify for the supreme status of knowledge."[16]

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[14]Ibid., 27.

[15]Brad J. Kallenberg, *Live to Tell, Evangelism for a Postmodern Age* (Ada, MI: Brazos Press 2002), 16.

[16]Ibid.

For Kallenberg, all three of these doctrines are problematic because they are culpable of reductionism, the over generalization of complexities concerning selfhood, language, and faith. His argument is that these teachings do not represent the achievement of searching for philosophical meaning and clarity. Rather, they were the emotional responses to an age petrified by a world that was rapidly changing.

While his work details the three basic doctrines of modernity, it also illustrates the way in which recent philosophers and postmodern thinkers have migrated away from such doctrines. He identifies three ways in particular. First, post modern thinkers are challenging individualism, secondly they are realizing that language constitutes the world and thirdly they are shifting the paradigm. He outlines the shifting paradigm in three aspects. The first being metaphysical holism. This means that groups behave like real entities. Secondly, linguistic holism or that language is humanity's way of sharing its social makeup and finally epistemological holism; this is the understanding that humanity belief systems form an interlocking deposit that humans share with other humans. As a result, evangelism in the post modern culture is a communal practice of holism.

For Kallenberg, the first notion of evangelism in a postmodern culture must include broadening it so that it embodies the story of Christ in a web of relationships that constitutes ones identity. Secondly, it must engage others in conversations spoken in Christian language, and third it must enlist the outsider in the telling of the gospel. He writes, "If conversion can be thought of as involving a change in identity, then evangelism must be done in a manner commensurate with our new social identity."[17]

Kallenberg believes that the gospel will remain a mystery to the surrounding culture unless the church lives out the gospel in the form of its life together. What this

[17]Ibid., 48.

says is that the baptized community must embody the story of Jesus in concrete terms that unbelievers can understand. The baptized community must indeed be a community. This challenges the notion of individualism. For Kallenberg, unbelievers understand the gospel of Jesus Christ when they are able to see what changes Jesus has made in the life of the believer. For this to take place, the story of Christ must be embodied in the life of the baptized community.

Kallenberg also outlines that not only must the baptized community embody the story of Jesus; it must realize that language plays a major role in the conversion process. "If conversion involves the acquisition of a new conceptual language, then evangelism must be akin to teaching a foreign language to people who do not yet speak it."[18] Evangelism in this sense is like teaching a person English who does not know it. It is not just about translation but it includes understand how words are used and how they are understood within the proper context. This is a major barrier for unbelievers to cross. Much of the language and liturgy of the church is foreign to non-believers.

George G. Hunter III, in his book *Church for the Unchurched*, echoes the reality of the language and cultural barrier of the church and the unchurched. He writes, "The largest and most widespread barrier (that we have any control over) that keeps people from faith is the culture barrier." He writes, "Unchurched people are struck first, and put off, by the dated or alien church subculture."[19] That is to say, that the language, the liturgy and the politically correct jargon of the church are so foreign to them that it creates a barrier that keeps them from the church. The researcher of this is work seeks to understand this barrier and remove it.

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[18]Ibid., 55.

[19]George G. Hunter III, *Church For the Unchurched* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1996), 59.

The third implication for evangelism outlined in Kallenberg's work involves a paradigm shift. This paradigm shift centers on the outsider telling their story as opposed to the believer sharing theirs. Desperation, curiosity and friendship may be some of the things that drive someone into close proximity with the baptized community. Whether it is the desperation of life or the curiosity of the church's ability to help or the invitation of friend, evangelism is a call for someone to tell the story of Jesus Christ in some lived reality.

One of the most important notions Kallenberg addresses in this work grounded in his understanding of what truly makes a community a Christian community. He writes, "What makes a community Christian isn't simply the fact that all the members hold roughly the same beliefs, but that they live out those beliefs with each other in ways that are faithful to the story of Jesus."[20] This is the piece that Hotep believes is missing from many religious institutions. To quote Scott Jones again, "To evangelize non-Christian persons without loving them fully is not to evangelize them well....[and] to love non-Christians persons without evangelizing them is not to love them well".[21] The story of Christ must be lived out in faithful and relevant ways within the community.

The researcher of this work understands that relevant ministries must have a communal component. In other words, churches that impact communities must be engaged with the community and not isolated from the community. One of the problems with the church is that all too often the church only wants to hear from the church. Community in this sense is not community. It is a social enclave that as little awareness

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[20]Kallenberg, *Live to Tell: Evangelism*, 91.

[21]Jones, *The Evangelistic Love of God*, 21.

about the needs and concerns of the larger context. When a church operates in such fashion it is impossible for it to live out the true meaning Christ intended.

In order for the church to remain a relevant institution within a post modern culture, it must operate with certain intentionality to partner with other institution outside of itself. It cannot be afraid to hear other voices. There is nothing wrong with the church entering into covenant with a secular institution. If that institutions goals fall in line with the work of doing good, the church can and should enter into covenant to aid in the development of persons. Lisa M. Hess in her work, Artisanal Theology outlines this reality. She writes, "Intentional formation requires a well-examined commitment to a living tradition, lived in an embodied spirit and by means of devotion. Living traditions require participatory listening and a willingness to be shaped by the argument lived by others in particular covenantal communities."[22]

John Corbitt's work, *Black Churches Reaching College Students*, is helpful in understanding the challenges in providing ministry to the college student. He identifies five areas that impact the student's involvement with the local church. The first area is freedom. The parents of the students are not present to tell them to go to church. "New college students can make decisions with little or no parental guidance."[23] The Second area identified is the churches failure to invite students to the church. "Too often, churches in a college town make very little effort to invite college students to become part of their congregation's activities."[24] The third area identified is churches failure of

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[22]Lisa M. Hess, *Artisanal Theology* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2009). 9.

[23]John Corbitt, *Black Churches Reaching College Students*, (West Berlin, NJ: Townsend Press, 1995), 35.

[24]Ibid.

programming for college students. Fourth, he points out that students struggle with peer pressure as it relates to attending church. "A new friend–maybe a roommate–may not feel that it is cool to go to church. Some students may not feel that they have appropriate church clothes."[25] The final area that John Corbitt identified as a challenge in providing ministry to the college student is the lunch schedule. "The lunch hour on Sunday is a problem–especially on campus' where the lunch hour is scheduled for white students who get out of church at about 12 noon–for black students who get out of church at about 1:00 p.m., or ever even later."[26] Despite these challenges Corbitt believes that every church needs to be concerned about its college students.

The church must be willing to integrate its faith in God with a covenant relationship with other intuitions; this is what post-modern ministry looks like. Jesus said that we are to love our neighbor. He did not limit this to Christian neighbors. He simply said Christians should love their neighbor as they love themselves. "Loving God well means loving one's non-Christian neighbor evangelistically and evangelizing one's Christian neighbor lovingly."[27] Post Modern Ministry shares the stage of influences with other belief systems and institutions. "The church must understand that its aim cannot be to silence other beliefs but to uncover opportunities to present the message of Christ."[28]

The evangelism of non-Christians must be intentional. Evangelism is the invitation to enter into the community of God and thereby become a disciple of Jesus Christ. Discipleship is the charge given by Jesus to His church. The church is to make

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[25]Ibid.

[26]Ibid.

[27]Jones, *The Evangelistic Love of God & Neighbor*, 21.

[28]Johnston, *Preaching to a Postmodern World,* 35.

disciples. Upon being raised the dead Jesus gave his final instruction to the church, the called out community. These instructions are found in the gospel of Matthew. Matthew 28:18-20, reads:

> All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

This is a call for evangelism, the process of leading persons into their initial commitment to Christ. However, it is also a call to disciple them into a deeper relationship with God. The church has come to understand this particular passage of scripture as the *Great Commission*. The researcher of this work believes that the Great Commission is still a great commission. The church needs to evangelize and make disciples.

Christian Discipleship is a concept born out of the ministry of Jesus Christ. A disciple is a persuaded follower of the Lord. A disciple is one who desires to be taught and willing to live out the teachings of the Lord. As a result, discipleship is the process that follows conversion. Today's culture is full of people who have no connection to the church. Christ not only commissioned the call out community to evangelize, but he also called the church to make disciples.

"The ultimate goal of evangelism is not to win converts but to make disciples."[29] The ultimate goal of Christian discipleship is to learn of Christ and to become Christ-like. As a result, Christian theology is not just about God but it is about humanity. The Christian faith is grounded in the love God and the love of neighbor. Christian

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[29]Ronald J. Sider, Philip N. Olson and Heidi Rolland Unruh, *Churches That Make A Difference: Reaching your Community with Good News and Good Works* (Ada, MI: Baker Books, 2002), 65.

discipleship requires that Christians take an active role in learning and reciprocating the love of God. It is the journey toward become Christ-like which requires commitment. Mortimer Arias, in his book, *Announcing the Reign of God*, declares that discipleship is a call to follow Christ without looking back. For him it is, "To follow the Son of many without any external guarantee, is the only way to be fit for the kingdom of God."[30]

Terry Thomas in his work *Becoming a Fruit-Bearing Disciple* says that to be one of Christ's disciples, "We must let go of whatever occupies the position of superior status in our lives so that Jesus can fulfill that position."[31]In short, a true disciple of Christ must love Christ more than anyone or anything else. Thomas' chief argument is that the best way to understand what discipleship looks like is to understand it through the lens of the New Testament disciples."The idea of Jesus fulfilling the position of superior status in our life was understood by his first disciples."[32] For Thomas, disciples are called to love in a unique way. He draws on Jesus' own words found in Matthew 10:37 to illuminate this fact. Matthew 10:37 reads as follows; "Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me."[33] For Thomas this was not a call to cease from loving relatives and friends but rather call to Love Jesus more than relatives and friends. The researcher agrees with Thomas in that Jesus must occupy the superior status of love in the life of a disciple. When Jesus is the love of the disciple's life, they are able to love and care for others out of their love for God.

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[30]Arias Mortimer, *Announcing the Reign of God* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1984), 7.

[31]Terry Thomas, *Becoming A Fruit-Bearing Disciple* (Berrien Springs, MI: Rehoboth Publishing, 2005), 48.

[32]Ibid.

[33]Mt 10:37 (NRSV).

Terry Thomas not only believes that disciples are called to love in a unique way but he also believes that disciples are called to lose sensitivity toward what is controlling their lives. He again draws this notion from the gospel of Matthew chapter 10. Matthew 10:38 reads, "And whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me."[34] This is an option for the disciple. Every disciple must be willing to take up one's cross. It is form of self-emptying. While the researcher agrees with Thomas, this notion is not easy to accept in a post-modern culture. The primary goal of our society is to acquire things. Our society does not teach self-emptying. Therefore, this reality creates a point of tension in discipleship for many in the post-modern culture.

The third point that Thomas lifts up in his book is self-denial. "Self-denial is the prerequisite for accepting the weight of the cross."[35] Thomas understands self-denial to mean entering so deep into the life of Jesus Christ that the disciple is no longer at the center of their own life. Christ and the mission of Christ is what rule their life. There is a cost of being a disciple of Jesus. For Thomas it requires supreme loyalty, self-denial and the cross. The researcher completely agrees with Terry Thomas and his view on discipleship.

Central to Terry Thomas' teaching is the model in which Jesus made disciples. According to Thomas, Jesus' primary purpose in choosing the twelve disciples was for companionship. "Jesus' outlook on life could not be learned by his disciples if they were not present with him."[36] It was through the process of being with Jesus that his disciples were able to learn how to be disciples. Thomas writes, "Jesus' disciples did not focus on

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[34]Mt10:38 (NRSV).

[35]Thomas, *Becoming A Fruit-Bearing Disciple*, 58.

[36]Ibid., 62.

learning his words, but they instead focused on learning his lifestyle."[37] Jesus spent time with his disciple in order to teach the mysteries of God's love and God's compassion toward all people.

There is a need to evangelize, disciple and educate the African American male because the hope for the African American community is linked to the success and survival of its men. While much as been said that raises the alarm to pay close attention to the plight of the African American male, there are many brothers who are doing well. Dr. Louis R. Jones highlights this in his book, *Evangelism in the African American Community*. African American males have become so dejected in the eyes of American society that some have labeled him an endangered species. However, Jones writes, "Contrary to the image of the African-American male that is so often depicted by the media, there are good fathers and good husbands who take very good care of their families."[38] The African American church must be instrumental in shaping African American males to live in the Kingdom of God and the *Kingdom of Man.* This program seeks to create a *Kingdom Man.* Sir Walter Mack Jr. in his book, *Passion for Your Kingdom Purpose,* writes, "Kingdom men have the God-given authority to define things and to call things into being."[39] However, before one can become a Kingdom man he must be evangelized in the kingdom and then set on a course of discipleship to strengthen his commitment to Christ.

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[37]Ibid., 68.

[38]Louis R. Jones, *Evangelism in the African American Community: An Evangelism Tool for Today's Church* (Bloomington, IN: iUniverse, Inc., 2003), 53.

[39]Sir Walter Mack Jr., *Passion for your Kingdom Purpose* (Tulsa, OK: Harrison House, 2004), 132.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

The theoretical foundation of this work centers on developing leadership for effective programming in the post-modern generation. If a church is going to survive in a post-modern culture, it must provide relevant ministry. Meeting the needs of people through developing programs that are wholistic in nature is important. While the proclamation of the gospel continues to be at the center of the church, many church leaders are realizing that people need ministries that help them to live out the gospel in practical ways.

New models of ministry must be developed in order to reach a new generation. In a post-modern culture, Christianity does not have the dominant voice it did in previous generations. As a result, the prevailing power of the church is not a given. It must be earned. Persons from a post-modern generation ask questions and they are looking for answers. Church leadership must be willing to answer these questions from a broader base than a pulpit ministry. There must be programs put in place to aid persons in their quest to live better in society.

The leadership focus of this project is to move the church from maintenance ministries to need-based ministries. Maintenance ministries (ushers, deacons, sound room, Nurse-aid, etc.) are in place to ensure that the church runs with a certain order. While these are good ministries, they may not meet a certain need in the life of the church

or the community. Effective leadership in programming ministries search for needs in the community and create ministries that meet those needs.

Churches that wish to grow must offer programs. Programs give order to a growing church. This is because one person cannot manage the responsibility of a growing ministry and its future success. Programs with capable leadership help the pastor meet the needs of the people. When a program church is healthy, the leadership's function is to raise up and empower lay leadership in a particular area of ministry.

There is a theoretical assumption that supports this ministry project. It is the assumption that we are all created in the image of God. The Bible clearly states this in Genesis chapter one. The image in which we were created contains our infinite worth as God's created beings. Connecting sacred and scholastic communities for the purpose of creating an evangelism and discipleship program for African American male college students is one of the many ways in which educated African American men claim a healthy identity and tap into their innermost spiritual resource.

The Historical Foundation

The historical view of evangelizing African Americans is well documented. It is without a doubt that the majority of Blacks came to America as slaves. As a result, Christian evangelism among African Americans began with the European slave trade. This does not mean that the Africans did not have a faith structure or a belief in a higher power prior to this event. Both Africans and Europeans of the colonial period shared beliefs in a limited earthly life and endless afterlife. They both believed that supernatural beings shaped both of these realities. "West Africans believed in a great variety of spirits

that determine what happens in this life and the next. Some believed that the *high god* or *creator of the world* constructed the lesser spirits or gods."[1]

Africans also had a belief system that focused on the ability to communicate with the spirit world. They believed that spiritual beings intervened in human events. "Africans received religious revelations through spirit "mediums" that passed on messages from supernatural powers and gods."[2] Africans had a religious belief system in place long before American slavery. However, African religious understandings and structures would undergo substantial historical changes as their involvement with Europeans increased. "At first, slave traders and slave owners rationalized the use of Africans as slaves because they were not Christians, but some slaveholders who were Christian preachers began to evangelize their slaves."[3]

It was through the horrific event of slavery that the gospel of Jesus Christ was proclaimed to the slave. As Africans began to learn English, they were able to read the Bible for themselves. It was then that they realized that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob was not a God who made slaves, but rather a God who delivered slaves. The narratives of Moses and the exodus from Egypt were stories of hope for the African Slave. It was this hope that produced the Black church.

The Black church grew out of the horror of slavery and the evangelistic efforts of the slave owner and the slave trader. While this is a reality, W. E. B. Du Bois adds to this by stating that the Negro church influenced the Negro's home in America. He outlines

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[1]Jon Butler, Grant Wacker and Randall Balmar, *Religion in American Life* (Oxford, OH: Oxford Press 2003), 15.

[2]Ibid., 16.

[3]V. Simpson Turner Sr., *Evangelism and Discipleship in African American Churches*, eds. Lee N. June and Matthew Parker, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House), 18.

this reality in his work The Souls of Black Folk. For Du Bois, blacks lived in a world that did not allow them to have a true sense of themselves but were forced to understand themselves through the eyes of another, namely white America. Despite this, Du Bois saw the religious life of the Negro church as a platform for true articulation of oneself and his/her place in the world. When describing the black church of his day, Du Bois stated that, "The Negro church of to-day is the social centre of Negro life in the United States, and the most characteristic expression of African character."[4] Du Bois believed as does the researcher, that the black church is the recognized midpoint of black life in America. It is where African Americans share information, where they fellowship, where they are educated and where they worship.

From its earliest formation, the black church took a special interest in the education of its congregation and members of its community. Black Christians have always been willing to support education. Whether through local associations, national conventions or personal commitments, black Christians have understood education as a means of liberation in this country. The greatest example of this is the black churches commitment to Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU).

It is important to the note that Historically Black Colleges and Universities throughout the county have strong connections to the black church and the black community. The Baptist Churches in North Carolina organized Shaw University. The AME church founded Wilberforce University in Ohio. The CME church founded Lane College Tennessee. These institutions were established to ensure that newly freed slaves and their children would have an opportunity to access higher education in this county.

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[4]W. E. B Du Bois, *Souls of Black Folk: 100th Anniversary Edition,* (New York, NY: Signet Classics, 1995), 213.

The HBCU helped to meet the need to educate African Americans in this county. This need was supported by the black church. It was not until the Civil Rights Act of 1964, that blacks were allowed to enter into other institutions of higher education. Prior to this point, Blacks who attended college went to all-black schools. John Corbitt, in his book *Black Churches Reaching College Students,* writes, "But when predominately White schools were forced to open their doors to students of all races, these institutions became interested in the talents of Black athletes and began to recruit Black students."[5] As a consequence, more and more Black students began attending traditionally White Institutions.

With the integration of the university, the connection between the black church and black college students began to weaken. According to Corbitt, prior to this integration the black church could impact the black student simply by supporting the historical black institution. However, because the black student was able to attend traditionally white institutions they were outside the realm of the black churches' influence.

The black church has always had an essential role in the educational advancement of its youth. "By the end of the twentieth century, a considerable number of clergy were placed in colleges and universities to evangelize and disciple students, as well as to assist them with day-to-day life challenges."[6] Christopher Mathis in his work; Evangelizing youth and College students highlights the need to target African Americans on the college campus. He writes, "While college ministries such as Campus Crusade for Christ

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[5]John Corbitt, *Black Churches Reaching College Students*, (West Berlin, NJ: Townsend Press, 1995), 6.

[6]Christopher C. Mathis Jr., *Evangelism and Discipleship in African American Churches,* eds. Lee N. June and Matthew Parker, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House), 147

and Navigators seek to reach African Americans, and do so with some effectiveness, much more needs to be done."[7] According to him, 80 percent of African-American students are now on historically white campuses and are not being systematically evangelized or discipled. It is this reality that inspired the researcher of this work to find a way to connect the black church and the college so that African American males are evangelized and discipled.

There is a deeper historical voice within the church that calls for the connection between the sacred and the scholastic. If one were to take a close look at the history of the church, the called out community, one would notice that there is a tremendous amount of discussion around the issue of knowledge and wisdom, information and inspiration, education and revelation. The history of American higher education is integrally linked the prevailing role of Christian churches in shaping American social and political institutions. From the early colonial period until well into the twentieth century, a growing number of colleges and universities were founded throughout the county by Christian churches, with the acknowledged purpose of promoting Christian values.

Throughout the history of the church it is clear that many theologians and believers of scripture discerned the importance of merging the sacred and the scholastic community. Long before the Supreme Court ruling of 1963, which pulled prayer out school, many had come to understand the significant role that God played in the learning process. As a result, the historical foundation of connecting the sacred and the scholastic runs deep. The historical voice of educating African American men in hopes of securing the success of the African American community and family runs just as deep.

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[7]Ibid.

One the chief contributors to Christian thought and theology is Saint Augustine of Hippo. While a philosopher and a theologian he is clearly one of the most important figures in the development of Christianity in the West. Augustine was born in the city of Tagaste, to a Catholic mother named Monica. He was educated in North Africa. It should be mentioned that at an early age in his life he resisted his mother's plea to become a Christian. As a result, he spent his early life as a pagan intellectual. However, he would later convert to Christianity and ultimately became a bishop in the Catholic Church.

One of his best works is an autobiographical work entitled *The Confessions*. Within the framework of the narrative he pondered on the ineffectiveness of intelligence if not applied with an understanding of God. In book IV of his work he raises a question that is deeply rooted in the spirit of a sacred and scholastic connectivity. While recounting his learning of Aristotle's *The Ten Categories,* he comes to an interesting conclusion. He realized that while he could read it and understand it he acknowledged the fact that he could not apply it to good without God.

The Ten Categories of Aristotle focused on all the possible kinds of things which can be the subject of an intention. Aristotle's Categories placed every single object of human apprehension under one of ten principles which he categories. He described these principles in the categories of substance, quantity, quality, relation, place, time, position, state, action, and affection. While this is a dense reading and a complex notion, Augustine declared within the pages of *The Confessions* that he was able to read it and understand it with little help. However, he also understood that without God his acquired knowledge could never become properly applied knowledge. He writes;

> Furthermore, what profit was it to me that I, rascally slave of selfish ambitions that I was, read and understood by myself as

> many books I could get concerning the so-called Liberal arts? I enjoyed these, not recognizing the source of whatever elements of truth and certainty they contained. I had turned my back to the light and my face to the things on which the light falls, so that my face, which looked toward the illuminated, and so no light played upon my own face, or on the eyes that perceived them. Whatever I understood of the arts of grammar and rhetoric, of dialectic, geometry, music, or arithmetic, without much difficulty or tuition from anyone, I understood because my swift intelligence and keen wits were your gift; you know it, O Lord my God. Yet, for this gift I offered you no sacrifice. It therefore worked not to my advantage but rather to my harm, because I took care that this excellent part of my substance should be under my own control, and I did not guard my strength by approaching you…[8]

In short, Augustine realized that while he could learn in the halls of academia he could not apply the wisdom properly in the world because he failed to worship God for the learning process. Consequently, his gift of learning was misused. To say this in his own words he "squandered it…on the quest for meretricious gratifications."[9]Meaning, because he failed to honor God properly he prostituted the gift of his learning.

Augustine realized that the divine presence was needed to guide and monitor the knowledge gained in the classroom. While reading the works of Aristotle and even Cicero's Hortensius, Augustine began to articulate the need for the divine presence. He writes, "Wisdom resides with you, but love for wisdom is called by the Greek name philosophy, and this love it was the book kindled in me."[10]Augustine had a strong love for learning. However, he understood that wisdom belonged to God.

While Augustine understood the need to honor God for the learning process, there is another historical voice that provides clarity on the importance of education

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[8]Temple Scott, ed., *Confessions of Saint Augustine, Book IV* (New York, NY: P. F. Collier and Company), Chapter 30.

[9]Ibid.

[10]Temple Scott, ed., *Confessions of Saint Augustine, Book III* (New York, NY: P. F. Collier and Company), Chapter 8.

particularity, the importance of educating African American men. That voice is the voice of W. E. B Du Bois. Du Bois believed that the Negro race would be saved by its brilliant men. As a result, he believed that in order to save the Negro race as a whole, the best within the raced needed to be educated so that they might guide the masses away from the pollution that sought to oppress and destroy the entire race. It was this teaching and belief structure that became known has his description of the talented tenth. According to Du Bois the talented tenth was "leadership of the Negro race in America by a trained few."[11]

Du Bois believed that knowledge and the process of being educated was an ongoing course of action. He believed that in order for persons to stay relevant in the every changing climate of society, they needed to continually educate themselves. He writes, "It is necessary then for men of education continually to adjust their knowledge, and this doubly necessary in this day of swift revolution in ideas, in ideals, in industrial techniques, in rapid travel, and in varieties and kinds of human contact."[12] It was this line of thinking that caused Du Bois to stress college and higher education for African Americans.

Du Bois did not view the talented tenth as an aristocracy of the elite but rather as leaders committed to serve others. He did not want the educated population of African Americans to operate with a selfish mind state, one that was totally consumed with seeing how much they could make for themselves. He believed that with knowledge came a commit and a call to sacrifice and to serve others. In his essay on the *Talented Tenth*, he

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[11]David Levering Lewis, ed., *W. E. B Du Bois: A Reader* (New York, NY: Henry Holt & Company, 1995), 347.

[12]Ibid.,348.

wrote, "All men cannot go to college but some men must; every isolated group or nation must have its yeast."[13] It was this group of trained men who Du Bois believed could bring about change for the whole race, if they properly understood the reasons for being education.

Du Bois believed that the primary goal for education was not to secure wealth but to become informed so that the educated could lead and serve others. As a result, he believed that character and planned programming was essential for the talented tenth to rise to their calling of leading the masses into a brighter future. As a result, he believed that the talented tenth needed centers of training. These centers would help them understand their calling. He believed that the black community needed to provide, "centers of training where men are not so mystified and befuddled by the hard and necessary toil of earning a living, as to have no aims higher than their bellies, and no God greater than Gold. This is true training…"[14] Du Bois saw the church as a center of training. He viewed it has necessary institution for educated African Americans to build character. He writes, "Our religion with all of its dogma, demagoguery, and showmanship, can be a center to teach character, right conduct and sacrifice."[15] Du Bois believed that religion could promote that the goal of education was not to acquire more things but serve others.

Both Augustine and W. E. B Du Bois believed that education was an essential part of living in society. Both understood the fact that education was not limited to the

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[13]Teaching American History, http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?document=174 (Accessed 09-18-09).

[14]Ibid.

[15]Lewis, editor, *W. E. B Du Bois: A Reader*, 352.

classroom. Both understood the fact that in order for the educated person to best used the gift of knowledge, that gift needed to be nurtured in faith so that the educated person would not waste or misuse the gift of learning. While these historical voices support connecting the sacred and the scholastic there is a biblical foundation that does the same.

The Biblical Foundation

There are many biblical texts that support the connection between the sacred and the scholastic community. For the purpose of this work there are two in particular. 2 Kings 6:1-7 and Acts 17:15-34 give clear biblical support for the need to connect this two learning communities. The selected Old Testament scripture serves as biblical foundation for the project focus in that the prophet Elisha, within this text is mentoring a group of men for the sole of purpose of impacting society for the glory of God. 2 Kings 6:1-7 narrates the power of such a community and gives a biblical model that can be used in a commentary setting.

"The books of Kings contain the history of Israel and Judah from the time of King Solomon to the period of exile."[16] The book of 2 Kings was likely written between 560 and 540 BC. Modern Bible scholars refer to this time period as Deuteronomic history. The Deuteronomic history was likely written shortly after the release of Jehoiachin in 560 B.C. in an attempt to explain to the Jews why their nation had been overthrow by foreign powers."A study of I and 2 Kings as well as Joshua through 2 Samuel indicates that the writer's intention was to evaluate Israel's history according to the principles given in the book of Deuteronomy and in this way explain why the nation divided after the reign of

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[16]The Oxford Bible Commentary edited by John Barton and John Mudiman (Oxford University Press 2001), 232

Solomon and why both nations eventually fell victim to foreign invaders."[17] Both nations rebelled against the will of God. As a result, they were outside of the protection of God. Therefore, the description of the period as recorded in the book of 1 and 2 Kings is a product of the Deuteronomistic Historian's interpretation of history. "The Deuteronomists do not hide the fact that they interpret history from a certain standpoint, but they also document it. The strictly chronological structure of the work in itself bears witness to its truly historical nature."[18]

The books of 1 and 2 Kings showcase the fact that the kingdom of Israel was repeatedly ruled by wicked kings, and even though a few of Judah's Kings were good, the greater part were just as wicked as the Kings of Israel. As a result, social and sacred disorder is a major theme in the narrative of the books of the Kings. It is apparent that the writer of these books understood this disorder to be the demise of said states. The Assyrians eventually destroyed the Northern Kingdom of Israel and about 136 years later the Babylonians destroyed the Southern Kingdom of Judah. The books of Kings harmonize with 1 Chronicles 28 – 2 Chronicles 36:21. While the Chronicles greater distinction is given to the priestly or Levitical office, in the Kings greater distinction is given to the royal and prophetic offices.

While the book of Kings focuses on the rule and role of the kings, it also highlights the placement and the purpose of the prophets. Israel's historical traditions illuminate the importance of prophets in the political existence of the nation. It is clear that the prophet was not simply a religious figure but a political figure. Prophets played

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[17]Holman Bible Dictionary, (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible publishers), 845.

[18]The Oxford Bible Commentary edited by John Barton and John Mudiman (Oxford University Press 2001), 234

key roles in the selection of Kings (1 Samuel 9-10, 1 Samuel 16) and the conquest of land (1 Samuel 7). Both Elijah and Elisha often offered critique and advice for the kings of their time. The first eight chapters of 2 Kings focus on the last days of the prophet Elijah and on his successor Elisha. "The Prophets influenced almost every institution of Israel, despite the fact that they were often viewed with contempt. In addition to serving judges and kings, the prophets also addressed Israel's worship."[19] They did more than predict the future. They were messengers of God whose proclamation called the nation to honor God.

The prophet Elisha is the central character of this text. His name first appears in scripture in a command given to Elijah to anoint him as a successor (1 Kings 19:16). Elisha accepted the called to the prophetic ministry about four years before the death of King Ahab. From the time of his calling he was a close attendant of Elijah until the time he was taken up into heaven. However, before Elijah was taken up into heaven, Elisha asked him for a double portion of his spirit (2 Kings 2:1-15). In the proceeding chapter Elisha heals a political figure in the Jordan River by instructing him to dip seven times.

2 Kings is a part of the historical books of the Bible. Other books included in this genre are Joshua, Judges, Ruth 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther. 2 Kings is a narrative work that contains the accounts of the kings of the ancient Kingdom of Israel and the Kingdom of Judah. Its purpose is to chronicle the history of the nation. It is clear that the writer of the text is interested in giving a social as well as a spiritual account of the people of God. "The sources on which the compiler of 1 and 2 Kings is said to have relied on are given as the book of the Acts of

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[19]Ibid., 1142

Solomon (Kings 11:41), the book of the annals of the Kings of Israel (1 Kings 14:19) and the book of the annals of the Kings of Judah (1 Kings 14:29)."[20]

While 2 Kings is a part of the historical books of the Bible, it is important to note that these books not are just simple history. They are also prophetic and theological in their point of reference. After a careful read of 1 and 2 Kings, it is clear that the author is trying to show that God's word will be fulfilled. Deuteronomy 28 is particularly important. This is so because Deuteronomy 28 describes the blessings that will belong to Israel if they obey God's commandments. The prophets of this time period constantly proclaimed the promises of God to the people (1 Kings 17-19, 2 Kings 1, 2 Kings 2:1-25, and 2 Kings 13:14-21). The importance in reading such work is that it gives an historical background for the prophets of biblical times. Both Elijah and Elisha appeared at crucial turning points in the history of their nation. Just as King Ahab was changing the official religion from the worship of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to the worship of Baal, the prophets rose to the height of their ministry.

> Now the company of prophets said to Elisha, "As you see, the place where we live under your charge is too small for us.[21]

The sixth chapter of 2 Kings begins with the words, "the company of prophets said unto Elisha". Prophets were often found in groups in Israel. They lived together and shared in activities, which encouraged them as they sought a way of being more acquiescent to the word of God. Members of these groups were known as *sons of the prophets.* This phrase does not mean that the office of prophet was hereditary. The term

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[20]Bruce M. Metzger and Michael D. Coogan, eds., *Oxford Companion to the Bible*, (Oxford, OH: Oxford press 1993), 410.

[21]2 Kgs 6:1 (NRSV).

sons of the prophet refers to those who were students. These students lived in common places such as a school or a college in which they were educated and trained to be public teachers or members of the prophetic order. These students were called sons of the prophets.[22]

The title, Sons of the Prophet was given to members of a prophetic guild. Samuel was the head of a company of prophets at Ramah. 1 Samuel 7:17 illuminate this fact. 2 Kings 4:38, 1 Samuel 10:5, and 19:20 all reflect the fact that prophets formed guilds or schools. "While most references to prophetic schools belong to the period of the monarchy, there is some evidence to believe the schools continued (Jeremiah 23:13-14)."[23] The college mentioned in the text seems to be that of Gilgal. This college was also referenced in 2 Kings 4:38. It was near Jordan. Prophets would often flock to Elisha for his instruction, counsel and prayer. As a result, Elijah was not only seen as a preacher and a miracle worker, but he was also understood to be the overseer of several schools. 2 Kings 2:5 is a perfect example of this. The students in the text were so connected to the prophet that they wanted him to join them as they searched out another location for learning.

The schools formed by the prophets illuminate the fact that they were well organized. Under Elisha's guidance they were active in overthrowing the Omride dynasty, and gained for themselves a king in Jehu, one who would co-operate in maintaining their influence and eliminating non-Yahwistic worship. This again highlights the role of the prophets to that beyond the preaching ministry.

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[22]Online Dictionary, http://onlinedictionary.datasegment.com/word/prophets (Accessed September 28, 2009).

[23]Holman Bible Dictionary, 1142.

Their first mission was to recall the divided tribes to a sense of their unity, as the chosen of God and to see that they were remain connected under a single king. They lived together in communities and wore a distinctive dress. They produced literature. They proclaimed the gospel. They provided moral challenge to the king as well as the entire nation. Therefore, it was necessary that they were educated and they remained involved in the educational process of others.

It is clear from the text mentioned above that the number of students was growing within the school. As a consequence their hall of study was too small. They were in need of additional space to facilitate their learning. "The place where we dwell with thee is too strait for us." This is to be understood literally as "the place where we sit before thee" i.e. "the place where we assemble and sit to bear thy teaching." Elisha visited the sons of the prophets in circuit, staying a short time at each place where a school was established.[24] Therefore, the role of the prophet was not only sacred but scholastic.

> Let us go to the Jordan, and let us collect logs there, one for each of us, and build a place there for us to live." He answered, "Do so." Then one of them said, "Please come with your servants." And he answered, "I will." So he went with them. When they came to the Jordan, they cut down trees."[25]

The phrases *let us go* and *let us collect* give occasion for the reader to understand the true purpose of learning. They show the importance of synchronized development of hand, head and heart. These students not only accepted the responsibility of building a new school but they actually suggested it. They are students who understand the importance of initiative. They knew they needed a school and they made the request for

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[24]Barnes, Notes on the Old Testament, Electronic Edition STEP Files 1999.

[25]2 Kgs 6:2-4 (NRSV).

additional learning space so that they might continue in their pursuit of obtaining a proper education.

Despite the fact that they were in need of additional space for learning, they did not request expensive resources or costly labor. When they desired additional space they did not speak of cedars or marble stones, but only of getting every man a beam. They were industrial men. Trees were rare in most parts of Palestine. However, they were plentiful in the Jordan Valley. The lowest level of the Jordan Valley was known as the Jungle of the Jordan because of its thick plant life. There are some indications in scripture that this same region was also called, the city of palms. Deuteronomy 34:3 and Judges 1:16 are scriptural references to this fact.

While the Jordan Valley served as a rich source of material resources for building, it was also a significant place of miracles in the ministry of Elisha. Elijah and Elisha crossed the Jordan River just before Elijah was carried off into Heaven (2 Kings 2). 2 Kings 5:1-14 narrates the healing of Naaman. Naaman; a commander of the military, was cured of leprosy after dipping himself seven times in the Jordan River. This was done at the command of Elisha. Elisha performs a second miracle at the Jordon within the narrative selected, namely that of causing the axe head to swim. Therefore, the school is strategically placed in a region that has both the needed material for construction and spiritual significance to nurture its faculty and student body.

> But as one was felling a log, his ax head fell into the water; he cried out, Alas, master! It was borrowed.[26]

As they were cutting down trees for the construction of their new learning facility one of the prophets lost a borrowed axe head. If it had been his own, he would simply

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[26]2 Kgs 6:5 (NRSV).

have had to resolve himself to its loss. However, because it was borrowed he is under obligation to replace it immediately. The feeling of distress at this loss reflects the significance of iron to people of an agrarian society. The Jews used iron for the heads of axes at a very early date. It was the basic material for weapons and tools in biblical times. While other metals were used during this time such as bronze and copper, iron became the preferred metal for tools such as plows, axes, and picks.

It is obvious that he cried out because the borrowed axe head was lost. However, there is a second reason why he cried, namely he was now in an unproductive state. He could cut trees down without the axe head. As a prophet, he had been trained to be productive. The absence of an axe head caused him to be uncreative, fruitless and ineffective. He could not cut trees down with only a handle. He had lost his cutting edge. Therefore his cry was two-folded. The axe head was borrowed and without it he was unproductive.

There seems to be a connection with the image of a lost axe head and the nation of Israel. That is say, that the nation as a whole had lost its cutting edge. What separated them from other nations, what guaranteed their victory was their obedience to God. The nation's obedience to God was indeed their cutting edge. This gave them the needed advantage during times of war and famine. Again the axe head was borrowed. Everything we know concerning God is borrowed information. It is passed down from one generation to the next. Whether it is oral or written, the information, the education is borrowed wisdom.

Without the axe head the prophet was left unproductive. He could not cut down another tree without it. If he tried he would simply be going through the motion. The

nation of Israel was in an unproductive state. They were simply going through the motions. They had wicked Kings, false prophets, and they worshiped other gods. As a consequence, they lost their cutting edge. Without it, their productivity was eliminated and their vision for the future skewed. What is important to note is even though the prophet lost the axe head, his cry showcased his wisdom and his knowledge. He was aware of his condition. He knew he needed some help. Furthermore, he was aware that someone could help him. Consequently, he turns to his mentor.

> Then the man of God said, "where did it fall?" When he showed him the place, he cut off a stick, and threw it in there, and made the iron float. He said, "Pick it up." So he reached out his hand and took it.[27]

Elisha responded to the cry of the prophet/student by way of performing a miracle. "The apparently banal episode is symbolically touching: God and his prophet can, in exceptional cases, defy the laws of gravity if God's people require them to do so." [28]He cuts down a stick, throws the stick into the water and the iron begins to swim. There are two things that are of interest here. The first, why does he cut the stick down? The second, what is to be said of the iron head swimming? It is important to note that he does not throw the original handle into the water. But rather, he cuts down a new stick. There is no indication in the text that the stick sunk, but only the iron axe head. Therefore, it appears that the cutting down of a new stick served as an indictment of the old handle. There was obviously something wrong with the old handle. It was not capable of maintaining the cutting edge. Therefore, the cutting down of a new stick was a signal of a divine summons for the iron to rise.

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[27]2 Kgs 6:6-7 (NRSV).

[28]The Oxford Bible Commentary edited by John Barton and John Mudiman (Oxford University Press 2001), 251.

There is no natural tendency for iron to rise in water. This is so because iron is heavier than water. Therefore, the laws of nature would suggest that the iron should sink instead of swim. When the Iron hit the water it did would it was expected to do and that was to sink. However, when the man of God cast the new stick into the water the text says the iron did swim. That is to say that did something it was not expected to do. The language made the iron float serves as a confirmation that this was indeed a miracle. Iron is often used in a symbolic manner in scripture. As it relates to the solidity of Iron it is used in scripture as a warning of judgment (Psalm 2:9, Revelation 2:27). Sometimes it is used as symbol of strength (Isaiah 48:4). "The imagery includes other aspects of ironworking; the furnace was a symbol of oppression, and the cauterizing effect of hot iron was used by Paul to describe those with no conscience."[29] In context of the selected passage of scripture, the imagery would suggest that of strength. The strength of the nation, the cutting edge of the prophet, the effectiveness of the work would continue.

The axe head rising to the top of the river and swimming is a picture of resurrection. It is a moment when the reversal of science and the revelation of spirituality are manifested. The resurrection stands at the height of this reality. Science does not explain the reality of the resurrection. Jesus rising out of the grave after three days cannot be explained through the channel of science. It requires the presence of faith. At the same time science does not explain the rising of the Iron head. Iron is heavier than water. Science teaches us that the heavier element always ends up at the bottom. However, the axe head did swim.

While the rising of the axe head is a clear picture of the resurrection, the retrieval of the axe head from the water is a picture of restoration. The book of Kings showcases

[29]Holman Bible Dictionary, 714.

the weakness of the nation but it also illuminates the promises of God to strengthen it. Resurrection and restoration are at the heart of this narrative. The miracle recorded in this text gives occasion to see the significance of pastoral leadership in the area of education and the extent to which training can impact communities and individuals.

The sons of the prophets were well-organized groups of students who were given counsel and instruction by the man of God. The prophet therefore was not only seen as one who proclaimed the word of God, but the prophet was also seen as one who nurtured the spiritual and the scholastic growth of the student to intent that the nation itself could be challenged to live for the glory of God.

The student prophet within this passage of scripture was left unproductive in the midst of the learning process. He had enrolled in the university but was experiencing difficult in an educational pursuit. His access to Elijah granted him the needed assistance in completing what he started. His unproductive stated was reversed by the prophets compassionate for him as well as his commitment to the learning process.

While 2 Kings 6:1-7 served as an Old Testament model for pastors being involved in a scholastic setting, the selected New Testament scripture serves as a biblical foundation for how in which the pastor is to effectively make the transition from the lectern of one's pulpit, to the lectern, which stands in the hall of the academy. The text of Acts 17:15-34 was selected because this is a passage of scripture where Paul is making attempt to proclaim the gospel or do the work of evangelism in a scholastic setting. He is dealing with a culture that is foreign to his own, but he is willing to engage the philosophers and even succeeds in wining a few souls for Christ. This text is critical in

exploring a biblical yet post-modern approach to merging spiritual and scholarly communities.

There are two possible dates for the writing of the Acts. The first possible date is c. A.D. 63, soon after the last event recorded in the book the second is c. 70 or sometime later. The earlier date is supported by the silence of major events such as the burning of Rome and the persecution of the Christians in 64 A.D., the death of Peter and Paul possibly in 67 AD and the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. If Luke, the writer of Acts knew the outcome of Paul's trial it seems odd that he would have not included in the body of his work. "Those who prefer the later date hold that 1:8 reveals one of the purposes Luke had in writing his history, and that this purpose influenced the way the book ended."[30] That is to say, Luke wanted his readers to understand how the church infiltrated the world of his day and in ever-widening circles (Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, the ends of the earth) until it reached Rome, the world's political and cultural center. This New Testament Book highlights the efforts of the Apostles and the Holy Sprit in advances the Kingdom of God.

The book of Acts provides a connection for the writings of the New Testament. As a second volume to Luke's Gospel, it joins what Jesus *began to do and to teach* (1:1) as illustrated in the Gospels with what he continued to do and teach through His disciples' preaching and the establishment of the church. In addition to linking the Gospel narratives on the one hand and the apostolic letters on the other, the book of Acts supplies an account of the life of Paul. Therefore, the book of Acts gives us the context from which we can learn the setting for his letters

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[30]Excerpted from Compton's Interactive Bible NIV, 1996 .

The same author wrote the gospel according to Luke and the Acts of the Apostles. The most direct evidence comes from the prefaces of each book. The addressee of both of these books is Theophilus. Nothing much is known of him, other than the fact that Luke leaves him an historical account of Jesus' life as well as an historical account of the churches formation. While little is known of Theolphilus there is a wealth of historical knowledge related to Luke, the author of this work. Saint Luke was born of Greek origin in the city of Antioch. He is also a close companion to the apostle Paul.

The social context of The Acts of the Apostles is such that it begins without the physical presence of Jesus. For, he has already been put to death, rose from the dead, and has already ascended into Heaven. Nevertheless, the body of Christ (believers) is yet still alive and the power of the Holy Spirit is active in continuing the work of Jesus Christ. As a result, the book of Acts gives a historical account of the work of the apostles that walked with Jesus. In addition to this, the book of Acts introduces the reader to new apostles and disciples. It is a book that narrates their actions. In addition to this it narrates the formation of the Christian Church.

The Acts of the Apostles is a narrative work of the New Testament. It is written in a similar fashion as the gospels. The word *Acts* denoted an accepted genre in the ancient world, characterizing books that outlined great deeds of a particular people or of particular city. There are several such books in the New Testament apocrypha. So of which include the Acts of Thomas, the Acts of Andrew, and the Acts of John. After a careful read of the book it is clear that the main purpose of the work is to present a history of the formation of the church, to give a defense for its existence and to provide a guide to handle its problems and its persecution.

Luke vocabulary seems to acknowledge the geographical as well as a cultural sensitivity of his readers. When he refers to Peter in a Jewish setting, he uses more Semitic language. This language is extremely limited when he writes of Paul in a Hellenistic setting. Therefore, Luke's literary style always fits the cultural settings or the events of each chapter. "At times he employs good, classical Greek; at other times the Aramaic of first-century Palestine shows through his expressions. This is an indication of Luke's careful practice of using language appropriate to the time and place being described." [31]

While Acts is a narrative work it is also an historical document. Every chapter and verse of Acts abounds with sharp, precise details. The book of Acts covers a period of about 30years and reaches across the lands from Jerusalem to Rome. Throughout the work of Acts, Luke describes all kinds of places, cultures, varying governmental administrations and dramatic events.

The Apostle Paul is one the central personalities whose Christian journey is outlined in the book of Acts. Luke, Paul's travel companion, takes the time to give us detailed accounts concerning Paul's conversation as well as Paul's ministry. Paul is without a doubt, a major contributor to the Christian faith. "Paul is second only to Jesus as the most important person in the origins of Christianity."[32] His importance to the faith is both scriptural as well as historical. Many Christian theologians to include Augustine and Martin Luther were shaped by Paul's work. The selected text outlines Paul journey into the city of Athens.

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[31] Ibid.

[32] Marcus J. Borg and John Dominic Crossan, The First Paul, Reclaiming the radical visionary behind the church's Conservative Icon. (HarperCollins 2009), 1.

> Then the believers immediately sent Paul away to the coast, but Silas and Timothy remained behind. Those who conducted Paul brought him as far as Athens; and after receiving instructions to have Silas and Timothy join him as soon as possible, they left him. While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was deeply distressed to see that the city was full of idols.[33]

The apostle Paul consistently found himself in situations where he was rushed away from one sitting to avoid harm. The given text is one of many such situations. Paul had previously had a run in with Jews from Thessalonica after preaching the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. He left that city and made his way to Berea. However, once the Jews of Thessalonica found out that he was in Berea that agitated the people of that city and Paul was once again encouraged to leave for his own safety. This time he is brought to the city of Athens.

This was the first visit that the apostle Paul made to the city of Athens. "Athens was the most celebrated city of Greece, and was distinguished for the military talents, the learning, the eloquence, and the politeness of its inhabitants."[34] However, when Paul arrived in the city the text says in verse 16 that he was "stirred in his spirit, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry." The stirring in his spirit indicates that he was moved with a deep passion to enter into theological discussion with the residents of the city.

The city of Athens was the capital of Attica, an ancient district of east Central Greece. "The city, which probably was named for the wisdom goddess Athene, was already an ancient place by the time Paul visited it. Indeed, human occupation of the area seems to date before 3000 B.C."[35] By the sixth century B.C Athens became the scene of

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[33]Acts 17: 14-16 (NRSV).

[34]Barnes' Notes on the New Testament, Electronic Edition STEP Files 1999.

[35]Holman Bible Dictionary, 128.

he world's first great trial with democratic rule. The Persians destroyed the city of Athens early in the fifth century B.C. but during the government of Pericles the city was rebuilt into an architectural wonder.

> So he argued in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and also in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there.[36]

Paul's pastoral passion to enter into theological debate with people from various walks of life exposes the heart of this preacher of the gospel. His desire was to win souls for the glory of God. The text says that he entered into the synagogue and disputed with the Jews. This was a common pattern for Paul. Despite the fact that his ministry was to the gentiles he frequently sought out the synagogue as a place for instruction. Acts 13:4-5, Acts 14:1 and Acts 17:1 all bears witness to this pattern.

While Paul thought it important to minister within the walls of the household of faith, he also ministered to devout persons in the market. When the text says, "devout" persons these were people who worshiped God after the same manner as the Jews. However, they had not been fully admitted to the same privileges of the Jews. They were Jewish proselytes. Thirdly, he disputed with those in the market or forum. This was not only the place where supplies were sold, but it was a place of public concourse. It was the place where philosophers were routinely found engaging in public discussion.

Paul's eagerness to dispute with a varied group of people gives occasion to the notion that pastoral ministry must in some way be willing to do the same. That is to say, the pastoral leadership is not limited to the household of faith, but there is opportunity to enter into dialogue with the devout persons within the community and those in the arena of public concourse.

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[36]Acts 17:17 (NRSV).

> Also some Epicurean and Stoic philosophers debated with him. Some said, "What does this babbler want to say?" Others said, "He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign divinities." (This was because he was telling the good news about Jesus and the resurrection."[37]

Athens was renowned, among all the cities of Greece and the world, for the cultivation of sophisticated philosophy. Paul says in I Corinthians 1:22, "For the Jews require a sign, but the Greeks seek after wisdom." Philosophy was their pride and joy, and the object of their constant search and study. In the text, there are two philosophic groups that are mentioned. They are the Epicureans and the Stoics.

Epicurean philosophy centered on the exploration of happiness. The Epicureans represented one of the major schools of philosophy in the city. Epicurus who lived about 300 years before the Christian era founded it. He believed that indulgence was the key to life and that pleasure was the greatest good. "The goal of Epicureanism was to acquire a trouble free state of mind, to avoid the pains of the body, and especially mental anguish."[38] Therefore, the basis of this teaching suggested that pleasure was the beginning and the fulfillment of a happy life.

Another important tent of this philosophy was that God existed. However, that God was totally unconcerned with the lives of human beings. "The Epicureans professed to believe in gods but held that the gods had no interest in mankind and that the world was left to itself."[39] Paul directed his main argument toward the fundamental teachings of the Epicureans. That is to say, that his argument was to prove that the world was created

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[37]Acts 17:18 (NRSV).

[38]Holman Bible Dictionary, 431.

[39]John Phillips, *John Phillips Commentary Series: Exploring Acts An expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications 1986), 347.

and governed by God. Furthermore, they did not believe in the existence of life after death.

The Stoics however, were on the opposite end of the spectrum. Zeno of Cyprus founded their school of thought. "As far as the gods were concerned, the Stoics were fatalists and pantheists. God was the world's soul; the world was God's body."[40]The doctrines of this sect was, that the Universe was created by God and that all things were predetermined by fate, that even God was under the control of fatal necessity, that the fates were to be submitted to; that passions and affections were to be suppressed and restrained, that happiness consisted in the insensibility of the soul to pain.

The Stoic regarded the ideal person as one able to suppress passion and emotion through reason. "Only in this way could humans discover knowledge and be in harmony with cosmic reason."[41] Therefore, Stoicism taught the development of self-control as the means of overcoming emotions. The stoic was unmoved by joy or grief, pleasure or pain. As a result, indifference was the key to life.

The Epicureans and Stoics had their own labels for Paul. They called him a *babbler*. This word is not in any other place in the New Testament. The Greek word for babbler originally meant *seed picker* it described a bird picking up seeds here and there. Then it came to refer to the *loader* in the marketplace one who picked up whatever scraps of learning he could find and paraded them without digesting them himself.[42] In other words, to call someone a babbler meant that they were someone who haphazardly put

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[40]Ibid.

[41]Manuel Velasquez, *Philosophy: A Text with Readings* (Florence, KY: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1997), 85.

[42]Excerpted from Compton's Interactive Bible NIV, 1996 SoftKey Multimedia Inc.

their thoughts together, one who had no idea how to really engage a philosopher. It was applied by the Greeks in reference to the poor person who collected scattered grain in the fields after harvest, or to gleaners, and also to the poor, who obtained a precarious subsistence around the markets and in the streets.

While some called Paul a babbler, others said he seems to be *a proclaimer of foreign divinities.* (This was because he was telling the good news about Jesus and the resurrection.)"[43] Foreign divinities or strange gods in this context means strange demons. Demons were not evil in Greek culture they were simply deities. Greeks worshipped many gods and they believed that every country had its own peculiar deity. The strange deity to whom Paul preached was the resurrected Jesus Christ. They supposed that Paul had come to announce the existence of such a foreign deity. Paul preached unto them Jesus Christ. Furthermore, he proclaimed him to be the Messiah. At any rate they were curious to see what new teaching he would dispute with them.

> So they took him and brought him to the Areopagus and asked him, "May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? It sounds rather strange to us, we would like to know what it means." Now all the Athenians and the foreigners living there would spend their time in nothing but telling our hearing something new."[44]

It is clear that the writer of this text knew about the agora or Public Square and the hill of the Areopagus. The text states that Paul was taken to the Areopagus, this was a common gathering place for open discussions, for judgment of civil matters and the place where great religious questions were answered. Areopagus means *Hill of Ares.* Ares was the Greek god of thunder and war. "According to Athenian tradition, the institution had

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[43]Acts 17:18 (NRSV).

[44]Acts 17: 19-21 (NRSV).

been established at least 1,000 years before by the city's patron goddess, Athene."[45] It was located just west of the acropolis and south of Agora and had once been the site of the meeting of the Court of Council of the Areopagus. By the New Testament times the Areopagus retained authority only in the areas of religion and morals and met in the Royal Portico at the northwest corner of the Agora. "They considered themselves the custodians of teachings that introduced new religions and foreign gods."[46]It was here that Paul took opportunity to expound his teaching to the philosophers and leading politicians of Athens.

Paul now faced a crowd that he was not use to faces. This crowd did not have the Jewish background of the Old Testament to which he could argue from. Paul was speaking to people who knew nothing about the gospel message or the biblical story. In previous cities such as Thessalonica and Berea, Paul entered into the synagogues first to teach and preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. He attempted to do the same in Athens. However, the Athenians did not have the Old Testament background to understand his argument. Therefore, he had to compare his God to the many gods to which they worshiped in Athens.

In a post-modern culture it is highly possible to come across someone who does not have a strong biblical or Christian background. Therefore, some of the language and liturgy used in the church may seem foreign to them. This was the challenge Paul was facing in the text. As a consequence, he decided to be more flexible in his approach to dispute and minister to the people of that city. His teaching seemed strange to them.

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[45]Robert Jamieson, A. R. Faussett and David Brown, *New Commentary on the Whole Bible: New Testament Volume, Based on the classic Commentary of Jamieson*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing , 1999).

[46]Excerpted from *Compton's Interactive Bible NIV*, 1996 SoftKey Multimedia Inc.

Therefore, he understood the need to use a different approach in order to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ.

> Then Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, "Athenians, I see how extremely religious you are in every way. For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, To an unknown god. What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things. From one ancestor he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, so that they would search for God and perhaps grope for him and find him- though indeed he is not far from each one of us. For In him we live and move and have our being'; as even some of your own poets have said, For we too are his offspring.[47]

As Paul stood to address the group of philosophers he began by saying in verse 22 that they are, "extremely religious". This should not be understood as an insult. Paul was not trying to belittle their religion but he trying to gain their ear for the sake of preaching the gospel to them. "The Epicureans and the Stoics were Paul's interlocutors in Athens, and, to the delight of every academician since, Paul took them seriously."[48] When Paul refers to them as being too superstitious he simply suggest that realizes that the city of Athens as a tremendous reverence for the gods or demons. Therefore, the term is used in a good sense, to denote piety towards the gods, or a suitable fear and reverence for them. It is important to note that it was not his custom needlessly to blame or offend his audience. Furthermore, it would not benefit his argument to begin his discourse by

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[47]Acts 17:22-28 (NRSV).

[48]David L Tiede, "The God Who Made the World," *Currents in Theology and Missions,* February, 2006, 56.

exciting their opposition. He is simply acknowledging their devotedness to their cause of religion.

Paul's basic argument is that the Hebrew God made all nations that inhabit the earth and that this same God allotted times and boundaries to their existence. According to Paul, this was done so that all nations would search for Him though He is not far from them. As he states in the verse, "For in him that live and move and have our being."[49] While this is a truth, it is also a quotation from Greek poetry. This is a quotation from Aratus, a pagan poet, from his poem Phaenomena, written around 270 BC in Athens. The line reads, "In, or perhaps through, whom we live and move and have our being: for we are his family."[50]Paul's use of the culture was critical in reaching this group of people.

While Paul used their poetry to teach the gospel message, he affirms the Jewish scriptural truth by proclaiming the goodness of God's creation. Furthermore, he states that their unknown God is known unto him and that He sent his son into the world and that salvation is made available through him because of the resurrection. The Greeks were afraid of offending any god by failing to give him attention. As a result, they felt they could cover any omissions by the label *unknown god.* "The play on the altar to an unknown god and the philosophical and poetic quotations offer a cultured approach to the message about Christ, quite unlike the gambits of the other sermons in Acts."[51] Paul does not start an argument with them but he establishes some basic truths, namely, that there is

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[49]Acts 17:28 (NRSV).

[50]Being the Church Then and Now: Issues from the Acts of the Apostles, http:// wwwstaff.urdoch. edu.au /~loader/BeingtheChurch5.htm (Accessed October 16, 2008).

[51]Brown, Raymond E; An Introduction To The New Testament, Doubleplay 1997

a creator God who is distinct from the world, which God created humanity and that the proper response to God is to offer worship.

> Since we are God's offspring, we ought not to think that the deity is life gold, or silver, or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of mortals. While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance, now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a ay on which he will have the world judged in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.[52]

Now that Paul has their attention he brings up the issue of their idolatry. It is here that Paul exhibits the fact that the Christian message exposing error as well as explains truth. While using the words of a pagan poet Paul proclaims a truth. We are the offspring of God. As a consequence, we should not think that God is our offspring. In other words, God is not the created he is the creator. The word "graven" used in the text is charagma, an engraving or a sculpture. "The only other time it is used in the New Testament is in the book of Revelation, where it is used eight times in reference to the mark of the Beast. All idolatry points in that direction."[53]Paul states that there was a time when God winked at such ignorance. In other words, he overlooked it. He passed over those times without punishing them, as if he did not see them. This was so because their ignorance was a mitigating circumstance. However, Paul had preached the gospel to them and therefore God was calling them to repentance. Paul was warning them of a future judgment.

> When they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some scoffed: and others said, "We will hear you again about this." At that point Paul left them. But some of them joined him and became

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[52]Acts 17:29-32 (NRSV).

[53]Phillips John, *The John Phillips Commentary Series, Exploring Acts An expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications 1986), 353.

> believers, including Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.[54]

It is clear from the text that the Paul's preaching of coming judgment and the resurrection is what puzzled them. In order to understand this it is important to note that Greek theology had no concept of coming judgment. Therefore, this was something strange to their teaching. Not only was this notion strange but the notion of the resurrection was also puzzling to them. In Greek culture, the body was prison to which the soul was trapped. Therefore, once the soul was release the notion of a bodily resurrection puzzled them. It gave the impression of the souls being once again trapped in the material body. This is why the text says "some scoffed."

Athens was a city for the philosopher not the preacher. Athens was a city for the critic. It was place was everything was brought before the bar of the human intellect. However, it appears that Paul was successful on two grounds. The first being, that there was group willing to hear from him again. Secondly, there were persons who believed. Nevertheless, Paul was at least willing to dispute matters of religious importance to those who were of a different belief.

Acts 17:15-34 highlights the significance of pastoral leadership in the area of education. Paul was willing dispute matters of religious importance to a new audience within the city of Athens. He was aware that his audience was not like previous ones. Therefore, he understood the need to change his approach. He went to the place of public discourse and preached and embodied the gospel of Jesus Christ. From a biblical yet post-modern perspective this text is essential in understanding the connection between the sacred and the scholastic. This is so because Luke, in capturing Paul's journey

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[54]Acts 17:32-34 (NRSV).

through Athens, as provided the church with an effective paradigm of how the pastor has well as the church can make the transition from the lectern of the pulpit, to the lectern, which stands in the hall of the academy. This cannot be achieved in an argumentative fashion, where the church as all the answer and the university has nothing to offer. It must use the language and the culture it's seek to minister if it either plans on winning a few souls for Christ.

These passages of scripture help to build biblical support for this program. However, there is still a deeper theological foundation that must be set. The goal of the program is to evangelize and disciple the African American male student body on the college campus. The church's position is that Christian theology and Christian worship has something to offer the academic pursuit. This is rooted in the fact that God desires for humanity to sharpen, to love and to encourage each other.

The Theological Foundation

Scott. J. Jones' work, *The Evangelistic Love of God and Neighbor, A Theology of Witness and Discipleship* was central in shaping the researcher theological foundation for this work. Within this work, Scott Jones outlines in a very practical way the theology of evangelism and discipleship. He writes, "Because evangelism is so strongly connected to the gospel, both etymologically and substantively, a theology of evangelism should begin with that which is most fundamental to the gospel."[55] The most fundamental message of the gospel deals with the love of God. As it relates to discipleship Jones writes, "Christian discipleship includes believing the gospel, faithfully accepting the relationship

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[55]Scott J. Jones, *The Evangelistic Love of God & Neighbor* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press 2003), 30.

God offers, and obediently following God's will in all matters great and small."[56] As a result, ones theology of evangelism and discipleship has to be built upon how one understands the gospel message as outlined in the bible.

The theological dimension of education is an anthropological dimension, and attention to these dimensions makes for excellent, effective learning. God is concerned about the development of humans in society. Humans cannot develop into their full potential without the power of God. It is spirituality that nurtures the mind. As a result, there is a clear theological foundation for connecting sacred and scholastic communities.

The Bible illustrates in Proverbs 27:17 that "Iron sharpeneth iron, so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend." The proverb expresses the gain of mutual counsel. Two minds, acting as one become more acute. As iron brings a knife to a better edge when it is properly grinded against it, so one friend may be the means of exciting another to reflect. That is to say, that it creates the opportunity to dive deeply into, and illustrate a subject, when there are persons with like interest working together.

From a theological perspective what this says is that God has designed humanity in such a way that humans learn best when they are connected to one another. This is so because God has placed His spirit within each human being. When a creative mind is connected to another, they literally have the opportunity to operate with a double portion of God's blessings and God's spirit. As a result, ones character is best developed and molded into the image of God when they are given opportunity to gain common instruction.

God has designed humanity to be social creatures. Therefore, persons in community must understand the great blessing of communal learning. Community not

[56]Ibid.

competition should be the goal of our learning. The obtaining of knowledge is a communal act. In order to know something, persons must rely on the consensus of the context in which they are rooted. The notion of iron sharpening iron is an example of communal learning. Real learning does not happen until persons are brought into relationship with each other and the subject to which they are learning. Parker J. Palmer writes;

> We do not learn best by memorizing facts about the subject. Because reality is communal, we learn best by interacting with it. In the practical disciplines, this may mean working with materials, creating artifacts, and solving problems. In the more abstract disciplines, it may mean learning how scholars generate, criticize, and use the concepts and date of their fields. In a wide variety of ways, good teachers bring students into living communion with the subjects they teach.[57]

In the context of this project, the irons that will sharpen each other are the iron of spirituality and the iron of scholastic learning. The two working together will change the countenance of the other. In other words, the church will be sharpened by its involvement with the university and the university by the church. The worshiping community as well as the scholastic community will be bettered through their willingness to enter into dialogue with each other. This in turn will aid in the realization of a better society.

The combination of Christian theology and scholastic study has much to contribute toward diagnosing what hampers the realization of a just society. Theology within itself is both an academic discipline and a practical responsibility of the church. The university is the premier institution for secular development. The goal of the university is to prepare men and women for professional service in the community. Colleges and universities are supposed to be strongholds of rationality, dispensing

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[57]Parker J. Palmer, *To Know as we are Known, Education as a Spiritual Journey* (New York, NY: Harper Collins, 1993), xvii of preface.

knowledge and cheering its application. The church is the premier institution for Christian development. It is a place of spiritual refreshment. It is the place where we are engaged by the very presence and power of God. Therefore, the church and the university represent the institutions that guide the two cities that exist together.

The city of God and the earthy city are given instruction through these two institutions. Augustine, in his work, *The City of God against the Pagans* writes, "In this world, the two cities are indeed entangled and mingled with one another; and they will remain so until the last judgment shall separate them."[58] If this is so, the institutions that provide instruction to these two cities should enter into dialogue one with the other. Iron does indeed sharpen iron.

While Iron sharpens iron there is another theological foundation for this effort, namely that working together and educating others and ourselves is a form of worship toward God. Mark 12:28-31 records a story of Jesus, the author and finisher of the Christian faith being approached by a scribe. The scribe raised the question, "which is the first commandment of all?" Jesus responded to him by giving a two-fold statement; that humanity is to love God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind and with all our strength. Secondly, persons in community are to love their neighbor as they love themselves. For Jesus, the greatest of the commandments were to love God and to love others. This two-fold response creates occasion to understand the Trinitarian exist of the believer. That is to say, that in order for a person to live at the level God desires, they must love God and they must love others. The connection of the divine with the self and the self with others is Jesus' model for learning how to live a productive life.

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[58]R. W. Dyson, ed., *Augustine: The City of God against the Pagans, Book I* (Boston, MA: Cambridge University Press), Chapter 35.

As humans learn about the world around them they are informed concerning the self and vice versa. In other words, the relationships that a person builds between other people and with God help them to discover their true selves. This is the great reality of humanity understanding the fact that humans are social beings and in need relationships and these relationships must embrace differences rather than fear them. The self, who a person is, is given definition when they decide what they are going do with the image they see in the mirror, the image others see, and the image that God has created them in. Jesus' model for interpreting this information is to love God and to love others. It is impossible to truly no one's self without forming relationship with others and with God.

It is important to note that Jesus said persons in society are to love God with their minds. Therefore, to excel in the classroom is a form of loving, honoring, and worshiping God. Proverbs 9:10 reads, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and the knowledge of the holy is understanding." Knowledge is gained information. Wisdom is the ability to apply the information gained. Seeing that Jesus, the source and norm of authentic Christian faith saw the importance of loving God with our mind and loving our neighbor as ourselves, Christians must take serious the notion of the churches role in educating and preparing persons to live to their full potential.

In her work, *Nurturing Faith & Hope* Anne E. Streaty Wimberly outlines the many ways in which education is embodied within the worship life of a congregation, particularly an African American congregation. For Wimberly, corporate worship is formative. She intentionally uses the word *nurture* which means *to suckle* in order to describe the worship experience of the Black church. She writes, "The image of the worshiping congregation as the nursing mother is a fitting one and conveys the idea that

persons may be self-educated, but cannot be self-nurtured.[59]"Her proposal is that the participatory nature of black worship, allows the worshiper to clearly discern the presence of God in the midst of life's ups and downs thereby giving them the needed hope to navigate this life. In other words, the African American worshiping congregation nurtures the conscious knowing of God's nature and God's presence. Scott Jones wrote, "Spiritual disciplines are best nurtured in a congregation because worship is the most important discipline and it should involve a gathered community."[60]

The commandment to love God with ones minds means that there is a theological requirement to rise to the highest intellectual level capable. This is only achieved by placing ourselves in proper relation to God and others in love. It is only then that we are able to properly understand Jesus' paradigm for learning and living.

The worship experience is a significant authority within the African American community. "The remarkable power of black worship makes possible our discerning a way through life's opportunities and its darkness by faith that always sees a star of hope."[61] The black worship experience is significant because it is an environment where head and heart knowledge of God comes forth. Sermons, songs, and prayer are the primary means by which this takes place. The participatory element of black worship is the essential ingredient in creating such an environment. Worshipers are not by standers, but full participants in everything that happens in worship. "The black worshiping congregation has always been, and continues to be today, a key participatory habitation

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[59]Anne E. Streaty Wimberley, *Nurturing Faith & Hope* (Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 2004), xiv.

[60]Scott J. Jones, *The Evangelistic Love of God & Neighbor* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press 2003), 75.

[61]Anne E. Streaty Wimberley, *Nurturing Faith & Hope* (Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 2004), xiii.

for Christian nurture that engages us in probing, naming, and forming images and beliefs of God."[62]It is nurturing because the worshipers are drawn into the narrative in such a way that the biblical story becomes their story.

The selected biblical foundations for this project support a biblical model for discipleship, evangelism as well as a biblical model for pastors making the transition from the pulpit to an academic setting. 2 Kings 6:1-7 gives us biblical proof that the role of a pastor is not limited to the proclamation of the gospel, but it also includes the preparation of others to live and to impact society. The role of the pastor as displayed in 2 Kings 6:1-7 is to nurture spiritual and scholastic growth. The narrative of Acts 17:15-34 gives us the strategic approach in crossing from the sacred to the scholastic. Athens was the home of the philosopher not the preacher. Yet, Paul was able to enter into the scholastic setting and dialogue with them. He was able to do this because he understood their culture. He appreciated it and he was able to integrate portions of their culture into his gospel message. For Paul, this was preaching to the post-modern culture of his day, namely the philosopher.

What we are able to learn from the foundational scriptures of 2 Kings 6:1-7 and Acts 17:15-34 is the fact that the pastor is to operate with a dual competency. In order for the pastor to be effective he/she must possess the ability to not only influence their congregation but to influence their culture. If the college and the university are in place to prepare men and women to function in society, the preacher should view him/herself as an instrument of influence in the life of scholastic learning.

The project focus of connecting the sacred and the scholastic, evangelizing and discipling African American males on college campuses is linked to a real documented

[62]Ibid., 6.

social need. All social issues are theological issues. Scholars, both African American and Caucasian, have addressed the challenge of African American college students attending predominantly White colleges or universities especially African American males. Despite the fact that African American men and women bear similar sociological and psychological scars, most researchers and community leaders agree that the retention of African American men is undeniably and excessively beneath African American women. "According to a 1997 report by the College Fund (formerly the United Negro College Fund), black women complete undergraduate and graduate degrees at twice the rate of black men."[63] Statistics display the fact that black males are more likely to be killed in a violent act and more likely to drop out of high school than to enroll in college. Some have even called the African American male an endangered species.

While African American males are entering into the scholastic community many are not leaving with degrees. "Today, African American male students have more access to colleges of their choice, but there is a high probability that they will not complete their basic course work, let alone attempt more advanced programs."[64]Discipleship or mentoring is the first step in reversing this reality. This brings us to yet another theological foundation, namely that mentoring is a biblical pattern for learning.

The biblical pattern and process of mentoring helps one to make sense of the knowledge they have been given and what to do with it. Moses mentored Joshua, Elijah mentored Elisha, Jesus mentored the twelve and Paul mentored Timothy. Paul writes in 2 Timothy 2:2, "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the

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[63]Bakari Kitwana,, *The Hip Hop Generation: Young Blacks and the Crisis in African-American Culture* (New York, NY: Basic Civitas Books 2002), 109.

[64]Reversing the Plight of African American Male College Students, http://findarticles. com/p/articles /mi_m0DXK/is_/ai_67582269 (Accessed 11-30-08).

same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." This is a challenge from Paul to Timothy to mentor others just as Paul had mentored him. It is a challenge to continue the cycle of mentorship.

Proverbs 13:20 reads, "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed." This passage illustrates the need for mentoring. The church has something to offer the college. The sacred has something to offer the scholastic and it is the power of truth. Jesus said, *I am the truth.* He was not inviting us into an isolated relationship with him that is separate from all of life's experiences. Rather he was announcing a new understanding of reality and how we should relate to it. Truth wherever it may be found and in whatever form is personal.

"The search for the word of truth becomes the quest for community with each other and all creation."[65] As mentioned earlier, the theological dimension of education is an anthropological dimension. Again, awareness of this makes for excellent, effective learning. God is concerned about the development of humans in society. We cannot develop into our full potential as humans without the power of God.

The three theological foundations for this effort are as follows; first the biblical principle of iron sharpening iron, illuminates the notion of communal learning. Secondly, the notion that mentoring others in their educational pursuits gives opportunity to worship God with our minds; which fosters loving each other. And finally, discipleship is a biblical pattern of learning. There is a real social need to evangelize and disciple the African American males on college campuses. This social need is a theological issue.

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[65]Parker J. Palmer, *To Know as we are Known: Education as a Spiritual Journey,* (New York, NY: Harper Collins, 1993), 49.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

The program of evangelizing and discipling the African American male on the college campus was born primarily out of two problems. The first, African American males from Elon University were not attending Elon First Baptist Church for worship. The second was an expressed need given to the church by the students for mentoring; providing aid through their academic studies. At the start of this process, only one African American male student attended worship at Elon First Baptist Church on a regular basis. The researcher's proposed explanation of why African American males from the university were not attending the church centered on the issue of relevancy. The researcher believed that male students were not coming to worship at Elon First Baptist because the church had not done enough to reach out to them in a relevant way. Furthermore, the researcher hypothesized that the need given to the church by the students for mentoring was the students attempt to make the church relevant for African American male students. In order to address both of these issues, the church needed to position itself in such a way that it became an extension of the learning process.

The first task in designing this project focus was to obtain the right information from the students on campus. The researcher wanted to design a program that would meet their needs. In doing so, he did not want to assume he knew what those needs were without asking the students. As a result, a twenty-nine question survey that focused on

five areas of concentration was established (Appendix A). The survey sought to gain insight on the student's background prior to attending college, their academic performance while in college, and their personal friendships on campus, their current and previous religious affiliations and finally, their campus life in general. A diverse group of ten African American male students were asked to complete the survey. Some were student athletes, some student leaders and other were members of Greek fraternities.

After reviewing the surveys, there were three areas of concern that the researcher was able to identify. The first area of concern was that eight out of ten students surveyed highlighted the need to increase access to African American mentors (Appendix B). Each of these eight students spoke about the limited presence of African American faculty and staff members who served as mentors. The second area of concern was that while nine out of the ten students professed a Christian affiliation, four of those students stated that they attend church only once a month (Appendix B). One student stated that they attend church when they can. With a continued study of the survey there was a third area of concern identified, namely, the church needed to find a way to become an extension of the academic learning process.

With three areas of concern identified, the researcher of this work designed a program that would address each area. The program design focused on trying to understand why African American males were not attending this particular church. Secondly, the program sought to determine if students could see the value in connecting to a worshiping congregation while pursuing academic study. Finally, the program sought to determine how the church could become an extension of the learning process.

The researcher of this work identified two approaches to address the issue of why African American males were not attending Elon First Baptist church. The first approach was to implement evangelism teams from the membership of the church. The researcher identified members of the church who were employed at the University and worked with them to put an evangelism component in place for African American male students. The second approach was to host a series of worship opportunities on the campus. If the students were not coming to the church the church would go to them. The researcher explored this option because it was possible that some students were not attending the church because they did not realize that this particular congregation was in the community. Also, it was assumed by the researcher that students were not coming to this particular church because it had not become relevant to attract them.

The researcher of this program also identified two approaches to determine if students could make the connection between the sacred and the scholastic. These would be achieved first through weekly spiritual formation groups. These formation groups would constitute the discipleship component of the program. Each week the students would meet as a group for one hour with the researcher to discuss the connection between their academic study and Christian scripture, prayer and theological reflection. The goal of these sessions would be to engage the students from a theological perspective concerning their study.

The second approach involved journaling the experience of the spiritual formation group. Each week the students would be asked to make journal entries. These journal entries would pertain to three things. The first would be a weekly affirmation written by the students based upon the discussion in the formation group. The affirmation would

serve as a change in behavior based upon the weekly group meeting. Secondly, a prayer written by the student based upon the affirmation they had written. The prayer would serve as a plea unto God to help them fulfill their affirmation. Thirdly, to journal how the spiritual formation group was relevant to their classroom or campus experience.

The researcher of this program also identified two approaches to determine how the church could become an extension of the learning process. The first approach was to establish an internship in partnership with Elon First Baptist Church and Elon University that focused on leadership for African American male students. The internship would allow the student to become engaged with the church while receiving college credit at the same time. The interns primary responsibility would be to research and educated the congregation concerning issues associated with the black experience in a post modern culture. The second approach was to design a leadership summit that would bring university faculty and staff members together along with the church to discuss a variety of issues that impact African American men in the 21st century. The climax of this summit would be to have the students develop personal action plans for their lives.

The researcher of the program began this initiative with three goals. The first goal was to discover the underlying reason of why African American males from the university were not attending Elon First Baptist Church. The second goal was to determine if students could see the value of connecting to a church as they pursued their academic degree. Third was to determine if the church could serve as an extension of the learning process. To gather this information, the researcher determined that a qualitative study would be the best approach.

Qualitative research is a field of inquiry. It is the process of building a complex and holistic picture of a particular phenomenon. The goal of qualitative research is to develop an understanding of a social or human problem from a number of perspectives. The researcher selected this method of research because the researcher's aim was to gather an in-depth understanding of the behavior of African American college students and their interest or lack of interest in the black church.

In order to check the validity on the program, the researcher used data triangulation. "In the social sciences, triangulation is used to indicate that more than one method is used in a study with a view to double (or triple) checking results."[1] Data triangulation allowed the researcher of this work to establish credibility and validity to the results. Triangulation is also called *cross examination*. To achieve this triangulation or cross examination, the researcher interviewed representatives from each of the stakeholders groups connected to the effort. This included interviewing representatives of the church, participating students, and faculty and staff members from the university.

The criteria for judging qualitative research is broken down into four parts; credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. "The creditability criterion involves establishing that the result of the research is credible or believable from the perspective of the participant in the research."[2] In order to establish creditability, the researcher collected data from the students in three forms. Data was collected through pre and post surveys, journaling and exit interviews. Transferability refers to the degree to

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[1]Definition of Triangulation, http://www.reference.com/browse/wiki/triangulation (social science) (Accessed 09-16-09).

[2]Definition of Credibility Criteria, http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/qualval.htm (Accessed 09-16-09).

which the result can be generalized or transferred to other contexts or setting.[3] The researcher established transferability by documenting the step-by-step description of the program. Dependability emphasizes the need to account for the ever changing context within which the research occurs.[4] The researcher achieved this criterion by fully documenting the changes and the challenges associated with the program. Finally, confirmability refers to the degree to which the results can be confirmed or corroborated by others. The researcher achieves this criterion by interview all of the stakeholders associated with the program.

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[3]Ibid.

[4]Ibid.

CHAPTER FIVE

FIELD EXPERIENCE

Elon First Baptist Church began an evangelism and discipleship program in the fall on 2009. The program focused on evangelizing and discipling African American male students on the campus of Elon University. In addition to evangelizing and discipling the African American male students on campus, the church sought to be an extension of the learning process. A steering committee was assembled to design this program. The committee included; the researcher, associate ministers of the church, lay members of the church, and faculty and staff members of Elon University.

The first task that the researcher sought to do was to establish the church as an extension of the learning process for African American male students of the campus. As a result, a proposal for a fall internship was submitted to the University (Appendix C). The intended impact of this 10-week internship was twofold. The first intent was to help those within the faith community to integrate their faith with social awareness and social involvement. The second intent was to facilitate a dialogue of learning between the University and the faith community in reference to civic engagement. These issues were selected because of the researcher's desire to address a wide range of social and economic realities that impact the African American family. After reviewing the proposal with the leadership of the church, the researcher submitted the proposal to faculty

members at the university. It was quickly approved and an intern was selected. The selected intern received college credit and stipend for the University.

The goal of the internship program was to encourage scholastic excellence, to provide spiritual formation and to create a model for leadership that students could exhibit to others on campus. The desired theory of change was to produce an atmosphere for the University and the Church to be engaged in dialogue. The internship sought to create this atmosphere through a number of initiatives. The intern wrote articles which were published in the Elon First Baptist Church quarterly newsletter. In addition to this, the intern gave a 3 to 5 minute oral presentation entitled *"The Black Awareness Minute"* during the weekly morning services. These presentations focused on various issues that were connected to black America and particularly the African American male and how the church could become more engaged with the social and economic conditions of the black family. These presentations focused on a number of issues to include but not be limited to the retention of African American male students on the college campus, HIV/AIDS in the black community and need for mentoring young African American males.

Finally the intern worked closely with the researcher to design a community discussion panel entitled *Black America: It takes a Village.* This community discussion centered on understanding the way sacred and scholastic institutions shape the black family. While the intern worked closely with the researcher to design the panel discussion, the intern also served as the moderator. The panel was held during the six week of the program.

While the internship helped to position the church as an extension of the learning process, there were still two other components to the overall program of connecting the sacred and the scholastic. Those two components were the evangelism and the discipleship phases. These components sought to understand and to address the issue of why African American males from the university were not attending worship at Elon First Baptist Church.

The researcher brought together the steering committee once again to discern an approach to evangelize and disciple the target group. After a careful analyzes of the congregation, the researcher discovered that there were a significant number of church members who worked at the University. The researcher created a sign-up sheet for members of the church who were interested in evangelizing the campus. The researcher hoped that some of the members who were employees of the University would sign up for the evangelism efforts. While only five members signed up for the evangelism component of the program, they were extremely energetic and willing to spread the good news of Jesus Christ. The evangelistic efforts of the program focused on event evangelism, the use of the technology and the personal witness of members who worked on campus.

The planned evangelism event for the program consisted of hosting a *College Day* event at the church. This event would take place during the 10:45am worship service. The purpose of the event was to highlight the academic achievements of the students, to raise awareness of God's role in the educational process and to simply invite the campus community into the churches sacred space. In addition to the worship service at Elon

First Baptist Church the committee explored the possibility of the church or the researcher hosting or being invited to facilitate a program on the university campus.

The use of technology, especially emailing and text messages were also incorporating into the evangelism component of the program. Every Sunday a student registration form was placed in the foyer of the church. This form asked for the student's name, the student's email address and telephone number. This information was used as a tool for evangelism. Once the students completed the registration form they were sent an email from the church thanking them for attending worship and inviting them to other worship opportunities. Students who were in the discipleship group were sent weekly text messages reminding them of meetings.

The final component of evangelism involved the personal witness of members who worked at the University. The researcher asked members of the church who worked at the University to share a positive story concerning their worship experience or their relationship with Christ with a different person each week for a period of eight weeks. With and evangelism plan in place, the researcher turn his attention to the discipleship component of the program.

The researcher wanted to design a discipleship program that was geared toward creating synergy between the church and academic study. The goal of the discipleship program was to help students see the importance of connecting to a church while pursuing their degree. In addition to creating this synergy, the researcher also wanted to create a program that would help students see the role in which God plays in their academic pursuits. After several meetings, an eight-week discipleship program was designed. The program would include weekly Bible studies that focused on following

topics: brotherly unity, understanding God's role in the educational journey, redefining black manhood, forgiveness, leadership, the community discussion panel, goal setting, and the importance of Christian worship.

With a discipleship program designed and an evangelistic plan in place, the steering committee raised a very important question; "How can the church attract students for the discipleship program?" The answer was unanimous. The church needed to offer free food. Flyers were made. An invitation from a staff member of the university was extended to the researcher to speak with a group of African American male students. Following that meeting, 8 students signed up for a discipleship program with the church.

There is a theological foundation for food being a part of the weekly gathering. Christian doctrine is best understood in the breaking of bread. The night before Jesus was crucified; He broke bread with his disciples. He told them that as often as they broke bread together they were to remember his body that was broken for them. When the Risen Savior walked with the disciples on the Emmaus road, they could not discern that the man walking with them was Jesus Christ. They believed him to be an ignorant stranger or someone who was simply passing through town. Jesus spoke with them concerning their recent experience of watching their Lord die on a cross. They did not realize that the stranger whom they walked and talked with was the Risen Lord until the breaking of bread. The breaking of bread is so central to the life of the church, that most churches gather once a month around a table to eat bread together as a symbol of their thanksgiving to God for the sacrifice of Calvary. It was this theological reality that the researcher sought to build upon in the spiritual formation groups.

The focus of the discipleship group was to create space and opportunity for spiritual formation. The students met once weekly for prayer and Bible study at the church. The researcher provided transportation to and from the university and led each meeting. In addition to prayer and Bible study, the students were engaged in each discussion topics. During the first meeting, students were given a pre-survey questionnaire (Appendix D). The pre-survey questionnaire was designed to gauge any changes in behavior, understanding and appreciation for God's role and the churches role in the educational journey. The results of the pre-survey along with the results of the post- survey are listed at the close of this chapter.

The first topic of discussion within the spiritual formation groups was *Brotherly Unity (*Appendix E). The selected text for study that week was Psalm 133. Psalm 133 outlines the fact that it is a blessing when men can come together in a spirit of unity. The Bible study outlined the fact that when men come together it produces a good atmosphere that is enjoyed by not only men but by their families and their communities. The unity of men is like dew. It produces water when there is no rain.

The researcher asked the students three questions concerning the Bible study. The first question asked was, "What are some things that hinder unity within the black community? As the students began to response to the question they gave a number of answers. Some stated that the negative images of African Americans portrayed in the media hinder unity. Other stated that the lack of a common and communal goal hinders unity. Others highlighted technological advancements such as email and iPods as things that hinder unity because they create opportunity to be isolated. While the media machine, lack of a communal goal, and technology were listed as things that hinder unity

the students offered another impediment in the process of unity, namely competition. The students believed that social competition to be better than the next person hinders unity.

The second question asked by the researcher was, "How can African American men live better together?" The solution offered by the students was to rethink the notion of social competition. They spoke at length concerning the social myth that tells them they must be better than others. The social competition to make the most money so that they could get the best looking girl was at the heart of this social competition. Instead of trying to be better than the next brother, the researcher encouraged them to focus on being the best they could be. In striving for their own personal best, the researcher stated that they would contributed toward living better together because they would no longer see themselves in competition to be better than their brother. As a result, they would be free to celebrate their brother's success.

The third question asked by the researcher was, "How does your educational journey contribute toward unity within society?" After a lengthen discussion the students understood that their educational journey would help them to discern their call to serve the community. The researcher spoke with the students at length concerning this reality. Education gives one the tools they need to be productive in society. One of the students began to talk about how his educational journal allowed him to see things from a different perspective. It was this newly found perspective on life that he believed would help him be more productive in the quest toward unity.

At the close of the first meeting one of the students approached the researcher and inquired about transportation to worship on Sunday mornings. The researcher calls this

student, Joshua. Joshua stated that he would love to attend worship at Elon First Baptist and learn more about the church. However, he did not own a car. As a result, he was only able to attend worship when transportation was provided. This conversation prompted the researcher to meet with the leadership of the church to begin including the university in the Sunday morning van route for worshipers.

During the second spiritual formation group meeting the researcher began a discussion that centered on gaining an understanding of God's role in the student's educational journey (Appendix E). The Bible study for this session came from Proverbs 9:10. It reads, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight." The Bible study also focused on Philippians 4:13 which reads, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." During this meeting, the researcher explained that God's will for each student was for them to be successful in their studies. The researcher explained the theological reality that knowledge and wisdom belong to God. However, when Humanity adores and worships God they are given to humanity. As the students began to discuss the role of God in their studies, they began to realize that God was active in ways they had not discerned prior to this meeting.

One of the questions asked during this formation group was, "In what ways has God helped you in your studies?" Each student responded by saying that they pray before a test and that prayer helps them to remain focused while taking a test. The researcher pressed the students to think at a deeper level in terms of how God has helped them in their studies. Three out of the eight students began to talk about their families' financial situation and how God had to secure a financial resource for them to be able to attend Elon University. Prior to this formation group meeting these three students all said that

they had not attributed receiving financial resources to God. Another student stated that after thinking about the question at a deeper level, he realized that God has helped in his studies by giving him the freedom to think for himself. He stated, "God gave me and everyone in this group a brain. We used that brain to think for ourselves." The second spiritual formation group session ended with the researcher praying that God would continue to make known God's presence to the students.

After the second week of meetings, the researcher discovered that one of the students, who the researcher calls *Thomas*, was absent from the group meeting. The researcher called Thomas following the group's time together. However, Thomas was not able to talk about his absence from the group meeting that week. He responded later in the week and said that he would make the next meeting. The researcher reminded him that he needed to turn in his pre-survey questionnaire.

On Sunday October 11, 2009 Elon First Baptist Church held a College day event at the church. This particular Sunday service was set aside to honor God for the academic journey of scholastic study. This event was held during the third week of the program. As a result, it followed the second formation group meeting which focused on understanding God's role in the educational process. The gospel choir of Elon University was asked to minister through song during the worship experience. Over 60 college students from the university showed up for worship that Sunday morning. Elon First Baptist Church had never seen that many college students in any single worship service. Worshipers wore their favorite collegiate attire, prayers of thanksgiving were offered unto God for success in scholastic study and the choir was remarkable.

The researcher preached a sermon that Sunday morning entitled, "I'm Reaching for Something Greater (Appendix F)." The sermon focused on humanity's drive to be ambitious and God's desire for humanity to be successful. The researcher stressed during the sermon that God wants persons to be educated, successful and to have nice things in life. However, God wants persons to understand that a relationship with God should be at the top of the list of life's accomplishment. The sermon and the worship experience concluded with one African American male of college age given his life to Christ.

Week three of the formation group focused on redefining black manhood (Appendix E). The researcher led a Bible study during that formation group from Genesis 1:26-27 and Proverbs 23:7. The Genesis text describes how God created humanity in God's own image. The proverbs text dealt with the power of thought and how self-expression defines one's ability to be successful. The researcher posed several questions based on the Bible study and the discussion topic.

One of the questions raised during the discussion was, "Describe some of things that have influenced your view of manhood?" Almost every student responded by saying, "my father." This was interesting to the researcher because the students did not offer some of the typical responses he assumed he would hear. The researcher assumed he would hear influences such as hip-hop and the media. However, the students stated that their father was the best influence on their understanding of manhood. There was a second reason why the response of the students was interesting to the researcher, namely the issue of fatherlessness in the African American community. Their response was critical because it highlighted the importance of African American fathers to the family structure. Each student credited their father for being a major reason why they were

studying at the collegiate level. The researcher noted that Thomas was absent again from the group.

Week four of the formation group focused on forgiveness (Appendix E). The topic was selected because of the prayer request from the week before. Two of the students from week three asked for prayer concerning forgiveness of friends and family members. The researcher strongly believes that forgiveness is a way of life for the Christian. Christians are called to forgive others. During the formation group the researcher pointed out four biblical reasons why a person should forgive. The first biblical reasons given were; you should forgive because God has forgiven you. Secondly, you should forgive because when you fail to do so, you become a person you do not want to be. Thirdly, you should forgive because holding a grudge can ruin your life. Finally, you should forgive because not forgiving destroys other relationships. Each of the students stated that the formation group was extremely helpful to them.

In addition to the weekly spiritual formation group meeting, the researcher spoke to a group of students on the University campus during the fourth week of the program. The researcher was invited to speak on campus for a program entitled "The Esteemed Black Male Program." This invitation was seen by the researcher as an evangelistic moment to share the gospel of Christ on campus in a unique way. This program was sponsored by one of the Greek organizations on campus. The purpose of the program was to honor African American male students on the campus who had exhibited distinction regarded grades, vision and character. The researcher gave a speech entitled, "Maintaining Excellence in the Midst of Mediocrity." (Appendix G). This event served as the second evangelism moment within the program.

Following the on-campus program the researcher had a meeting with one of the staff members of Elon University. During the meeting, the researcher mentioned that Thomas had not been present in any of the recent spiritual formation meetings. Ironically, the staff member also stated that Thomas had been skipping classes and that Thomas' grades were slipping. This was a major concern for both the researcher and the staff member of the university. Following that meeting, both the staffer and the researcher stated that they would reach out to Thomas to see what was going on and how they could better support him in his efforts scholastically, personal and spiritually.

During week five of the program the focus was on leadership (Appendix E). This subject matter was selected to help the students prepare for the community panel discussion that was scheduled for the following week. The spiritual formation groups or the discipleship portion of the program was designed to help students see the connection between God and their studies. The formation groups were put in place to help students see the blessing in connecting to a church while pursing their academy degree. The researcher wanted the students to begin seeing themselves as leaders on campus.

The two passages of scripture that were selected for study during week five were, Exodus 18:17-18, 21-22 and Matthew 20:27. The Exodus text dealt with Moses and Jethro. Jethro wants Moses to begin to delegate some of his leadership responsibility. The delegation of these responsibilities was for the betterment of the people as well as Moses. The Matthew text dealt with Jesus' view of leadership, where leaders were required to be servants in order to lead. The researcher stressed the fact that God had called each of them to be leaders and that their educational journey was the route that God had chosen to prepare them for future leadership roles.

Following the group session of week five the researcher sent a text message to Thomas. Surprisingly Thomas responded. This was surprising to the researcher because Thomas had not responded to prior phone calls or text messages. Thomas apologized for dropping out of the group. He said that he wanted to speak with the researcher. However, he did not know how to approach him. The researcher offered Thomas a place back in the group. Thomas stated that he would think about it and get back to the researcher.

Week six on the program consisted of a community panel entitled, "Black America: It Takes a Village." This was a community discussion. The students within the program were asked to attend and journal their experience. The focus of the discussion centered on understanding ways in which the sacred and the scholastic communities shape the black family. Community leaders, all African Americans, were called to the church to serve as panelist for the discussion. The community leaders included; a lawyer, a high school educator and administer, a director from the University campus, a community pastor, one the students from the spiritual formation group and the researcher.

The discussion centered on the village motif. Panelist gave their views on what the language of *village* meant to them. One panelist stated that the village was a small community where everybody was somebody. One panelist stated that the village was a place where people shared resources. One panelist stated that the village was a place where the correction of children was not limited to parents, but was the responsibility of adults within the village.

The panel dealt with a wide range of topics. Some of the topic discussed included; divorce, retention of African American males on college campus, academic success for youth, the role of the black church, and the public school system and higher education.

The village motif continued throughout the community discussion. Each panelist acknowledged problems within the village and they were asked to identify possible solutions from their professional expertise. This event attracted students from the university, community leaders as well as congregates. The community panel served as the third evangelism opportunity of the program.

During week seven of the program the researcher met with the students to help them create personalized action plans. The researcher saw this moment as the climax of his time with the students. He wanted the students to leave the experience with an action plan for their lives. During the week of the program the researcher help the students create SMART goals. SMART is an acronym that stands for *Specific*, *Measurable*, *Realistic* and *Timely*.[1] The researcher explained to the students that in order for a goal to be a SMART goal, it needed to meet these criteria.

When considering the specific portion of the goal, the researcher explained to the students that they needed to determine what they wanted to do or accomplish. For measurability, they needed to determine the extent to which the goal had been reached. The researcher stressed that the goal needed to be achievable. When the goal is achievable it is easier to commit to it. The relevance of the goal would take into a account how meaningful the goal was to the student. Finally, the students needed a timeframe. A timeframe would give them a target to work towards. After explaining the SMART goals to the students, the researcher then gave each student a personal action plan worksheet (Appendix H). They were to use this worksheet to outline their goals and how they planned on accomplishing them.

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[1]Goal Setting Guide, www.goal-setting-guide.com/smart-goals.html (Accessed November 11, 2009).

During, the eighth and final week of the program the students were asked to complete a post survey. The post survey sought to identity any changes in behavior or understanding concerning God's role in the life of their education and their commitment to worship. In addition to completing the post survey, students were also interviewed as they exited the program. The exit interview was via a questionnaire. Upon completing the post survey and exit interview, the students turned in the journals which were given at the start of the program. The results of the pre and post survey, the journal entries as well the exit interviews reflect significant behavioral and attitude changes.

PRE AND POST SURVEY RESPONSES

1. Do you currently keep a Personal Journal?

Pre Survey Responses	Post Survey Reponses
6 said no	7 said yes
1 said yes	

2. Do you recite Daily Affirmations?

Pre Survey Responses	Post Survey Responses
6 said no	7 said yes
1 said yes	

Analyzing the Data

Habakkuk 2:2 reads, "And the Lord answered me, and said, write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it." At the beginning of this program only one of the students reported keeping some type of written journal. The same students stated that they recited daily affirmations. Upon completing the program, all eight students kept journals and recited daily personal affirmations. In addition to this, all eight students stated that they would continue to write their thoughts, goals and

affirmations down. The data reflects a 99 percent change in behavior and understanding as it relates to the importance of writing down goals.

3. How often do you Study

Pre Survey Response	Post Survey Response
3 students said right before a test	3 students said daily
2 students said daily	4 students said three times a week
2 students said three times a week	

Analyzing the Data

II Timothy 2:15 reads, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth." At the beginning of this program, three of the students stated the only time they studied was right before a test, two students stated they study daily and two students stated they study three times a week. After completing the program, study habits improved. None of the students reported waiting until test time to study. Rather, three students stated they study daily and 4 reported studying at least three times a week.

4. Do you have a Religious Affiliation?

Pre Survey Response	Post Survey Response
5 said yes	7 said yes
1 said no	
1 said spiritual with no affiliation	

5. Do you Attend Church?

Pre Survey Response	Post Survey Response
4 said no	5 said yes
3 said yes	2 said no

Analyzing the Data

John 15:4 reads, "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me." At the start of the program one student reported that he was spiritual with no religious affiliation. While another student stated that he had no religious affiliation at all. However, by in the end of the program both of these students stated that had made personal Christian Affiliations. The results also show that church attendance increased with the students. At the start of the program only three students stated they attended church. At the close of the program that number had increased from three students to five students attending church regularly. As a result, the date reflects an increase in the students understanding of the role Christian spirituality plays in their life.

6. How often do you attend church?

Pre Survey Response	Post Survey Response
4 said whenever time permits	3 said every week
1 said every week	2 said once a month
1 said once a month	2 said whenever time permits
1 twice a month	

7. Do you pray daily?

Pre Survey Response	Post Survey Response
4 said yes	6 said yes
3 said no	1 said no

Analyzing the Data

Hebrews 10:25 reads, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more as ye see the day approaching." At the start of the program four of the students reported they attended church whenever time permitted. One student reported that they attended church weekly.

At the programs end, three students were attending worship weekly, two were attending twice a month. Two students stated they attended whenever time permitted. These numbers reflect improvement in the student's corporate worship life. In addition to this, the results also reflect an improved prayer life for the students. At the end of the program six of the seven students reported that they pray daily. This is an increase from four students praying daily at the start of the program.

8. How often do you read religious material or scripture?

Pre Survey Response	Post Survey Response
7 sometimes	4 said often
	3 said sometimes

Analyzing the Data

Joshua 1:7 reads, "Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest." Scripture reading was central to the discipleship portion of this program. At the beginning of the program all seven students stated they read scripture sometimes. However, by the end of the program four of them stated they have found the scriptures to be more relevant to their daily lives and they are now reading the Bible often.

9. Describe your current connection to Elon First Baptist Church?

Pre Survey Response	Post Survey Response
6 said no connection	7 said they felt connected
1 said somewhat connected	10. Describe your current
knowledge of Elon First Baptist Church?	

Pre Survey Response	Post Survey Response
4 said extremely limited	7 said they had a basic knowledge
2 said limited	
1 said basic knowledge	

Analyzing the Data

Hebrews 13:2 reads, "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." At the start of the program none of the students had a connection to Elon First Baptist Church. In addition to this, over half of them stated that they had limited knowledge of the church. After spending eight weeks with the researcher, both their knowledge and the connection with the church increased. At the start of the program, the researcher believed that one of the reasons why students did not attend the church was because of a limited connection or knowledge of the worshiping community. With an increased awareness of the church, church attendance increased. See diagram listed below.

Weekly Attendance Tracker

Data reflects total number of African American students who were ministered to at Elon First Baptist during the timeframe of the program. Prior to the start of this program only one African American male was attending Elon First Baptist on a regular basis.

Week #	Male	Female	Total
1.	9	3	12
2.	9	1	10
3.	26	38	64
4.	12	7	19
5.	13	7	20

6.	6	2	8
7.	11	3	14
8.	8	4	12

Analyzing the Data

The data reflects the program greatly improved the churches ability to minister to African American males on a weekly basis. The church went from ministering to 1 male student peer week to an average of 12 male students per week. The data also reflects that on average 8 female students were being ministered to weekly during the course of the program.

CHAPTER SIX

REFLECTION, SUMMARY, AND CONCLUSION

As the program came to a close, the researcher realized that he had learned many lessons throughout its implementation. Over the course of an eight period, the researcher mentored, taught and provided a pastoral influence in the lives of seven African American male college students. While this was achieved, there were some things that the students actually taught the researcher. The researcher was able to reflect on this reality at the close of the program. In addition to the learning and growth that took place within the researcher, the researcher as also took the time to reflect on some of the things that should have been included in the program.

The ministry focus was to evangelize and disciple African American male college students. After implementing an eight-week program designed around that ministry focus, there were several things that the researcher learned. First, the researcher learned that evangelism in a college setting is different than that in the community or even that of sanctuary evangelism. Evangelism in the community is generally done through personal witness, canvassing the neighborhood and/or providing a ministry that meets the needs of persons who are not currently apart of the congregation. Sanctuary evangelism is done when visitors have accessed the sanctuary. Members embrace visitors with a spirit of hospitality. They are made to feel welcomed and information concerning the church is usually disseminated to them. However, to evangelize a college campus requires that one

understand the campus culture, and realizing that the campus is a community within itself. The researcher needed help in order to reach the students. As a result, in order to access the students effectively, the researcher needed access and acceptance from staff members, choir presidents, faculty members and advisors. The researcher learned that in order to evangelize the campus he needed to determine who the gate keepers were on campus.

The second lesson that the researcher learned throughout this program was that many college students who are Christians don't attend church because of their new found freedom and independence. Many students on campus who are Christian regularly attended worship services while at home with their parents. However, now that they are many miles away from home, they have a new found freedom that gives them the option of attending or not attending worship. This freedom and independence is a strong competitor for time on Sunday morning. Many students have attended football games, parties or other social events on Saturday evenings and use Sunday morning as a day of sleep and study. This freedom of not going to church must be overcome by making the church relevant in the life of the college age student.

The third lesson learned was that if the church is going to reach college age students, particular African American males, it must offer something to them other than Sunday morning worship. The church and the pastor must find a way to build a relationship with them. The researcher used text messages and emails during the week to build a relationship with the students outside of Sunday morning. The researcher would send a simple text message before a test to let the students know that he was praying for them. The researcher would simply walk the campus during the day. When the students

saw the researcher on campus this presented opportunities to build relationships outside Sunday morning.

After reflecting on the program, the researcher realized that there were several things that should have been included during its implementation. The first thing that the researcher realized that was missing from the program was that the program did not include any interaction with members of the church who were of college age. The student's primary contact was with the researcher during the spiritual formation groups. While students had contact with other members of the church during Sunday morning worship, there should have been some sessions throughout the program where they were partnered with members of the church particularly members who were of their own age. This missed opportunity could have created greater dialogue with the students as well as a greater discipleship and evangelistic moment.

The second thing that the researcher has identified involves the spiritual formation or discipleship group curriculum. Each spiritual formation or discipleship group meeting was prescribed. Meaning, the lesson plan along with the scriptures and discussion questions were already laid out to ensure a fruitful discussion. However, in reflection, there should have been time carved out that was open to the students. Each week one student could have been assigned ten minutes for personal sharing with the group. That portion of time during each session could have served as a moment to hear from the students without a prescribed lesson plan. The benefit of adding this space within the session would have allowed the student to operate with trust for the group as well as the researcher. If the students wanted to discuss something that happened on campus that day

or something that may have been going on in their family, the spiritual formation group could have meet a therapeutic need for the student.

Because this program was a qualitative research effort, the researcher developed a number of ways to collect and analyze data. The pre and post surveys were merely one means of data collection. In addition to the pre and post survey, students were asked to keep journals throughout the program and they were interviewed as they exited the program.

Each student was given a journal at the beginning of the program. The researcher wanted the students to journal their experience in the formation groups. The students were asked to make at least three entries per session. The first journal entry was to write a weekly self-affirmation statement based on that week's discussion. The researcher wanted to know if the discussion would cause a change in behavior as it related to personal life and study habits. The second journal entry involved writing a prayer. The researcher wanted the students to write a prayer to God, asking for God's help in fulfilling that week's affirmation. The final journal entry was a reflection on how the formation group was relevant to their classroom or campus experience.

In addition to pre and post surveys and the journals, the third means of data collection was gathered by way of exit interviews. Each student was interviewed. They were asked a list of questions to gain an understanding from the student's perspective. The researcher wanted to hear directly from the students. The following data reflects significant findings from the journal entries as well as the findings from the exit interview. The names of the students have been changed to ensure their privacy.

Significant Findings from Peter's Journal

The first entry that caught the attention of the researcher in Peter's journal was his entry for week three. The discussion for week three centered on redefining black manhood. The following quote comes directly from his journal.

> Based on this week's discussion on how African Americans are perceived and all, I will make sure that I do my part to make our race look respectable and help others who need it. Dear God, I thank you for waking me up the past couple of days. I ask that you help me make a good name for African Americans, but also have people know that I am one person and not an entire race. This week's meeting has helped me in the classroom because it has basically told me that as sad as it sounds people who are not from my ethnicity, see me as an entire race and will make judgments. I do not need to alter my attitude, just simply let people know that I am one person.[1]

This entry was interesting to the researcher because it seemed that the formation group helped Peter see the importance of individual responsibility. Peter's journal entry reflects the fact that individuals are often a part of groups; and persons outside of those groups generally do not recognize individuality that is present within. Peter's determination to be himself, while at the same time to do the best he could to represent his race, reflects personal growth and maturity.

The second entry that caught the attention of the researcher was Peter's entry for week four. The discussion for week four was about forgiveness. The following quote comes directly from his journal.

> Based on this week's discussion about forgiving others, I find myself as a person who holds many grudges. I am normally able to forgive, but when one crosses me, it is hard to gain my respect again. This is something I must fix because as a man and human being, holding grudges is unhealthy on the body, mind and soul. Dear God, thank you for waking me up today, I ask that you forgive me for my sins of today and yesterday. Please help me to

[1] Journal entry from week three of Peter's journal.

> overcome this natural feeling of anger for one person. If they cross me, in anger I give them control over me. Help me see the light in your son's name Christ Jesus Amen. This week's talk helped me because I know that there will be persons who cross me out of spite or just plain ignorance.[2]

It seems as if the discussion during week three was a breakthrough conversation for Peter. Peter acknowledged that this was a major stumbling block for him. The formation group on forgiveness seemed to help him see that holding grudges was unhealthy. The entry was also interesting because he ended the prayer in Jesus' name. Peter was one of the students during the pre-survey admitted that he did not have a religious affiliation.

Week three and week four of Peter's journal reflects a change in thinking as it relates to scripture, God and his personal journey. Self-evaluation is necessary for personal growth and human development. Peter's journal reflects this reality. His self-evaluation and his newly found revelation of the power of individuality while still being a part of a group and his admittance of grudge holding appears to be clear stages of transition as it relates to his participation in the group. In addition, his prayer offered in the name of Jesus reflects a significant change in his religious affiliations.

Exit Interview for Peter

1. What were your thoughts coming into this program? *"Honestly, I thought that coming into this program; you guys would try and force religion on me through this eight week program."*

2. What are your thoughts leaving the program? *"My thought leaving is that I'm very glad I participated. I learned a lot from everybody and got to share my point of view on the topics."*

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[2]Journal entry from week four of Peter's journal.

3. Has the program changed or confirmed your perception about the role spirituality plays in the life of your education? If so, please describe the change. *"A little bit because with applying the scriptures to our academic lives. I see that spirituality not only helps you with yourself, but with everything else also."*

4. Do you feel you gained anything from participating in this program? If so, what? *"Yes, A new outlook on the connectivity with religion and spirituality and our personal lives."*

5. Based on completing this program what do you think you will do differently? *"I think I will stick to my action plan once it is more defined, start to forgive people more and help people more."*

6. If this program were offered again, would you participate? Would you invite other to participate? Why or why not? *"Yes, I would. I would offer it to other people, because although if they do or don't have ideas about this, leaving this program will definitely change them for the better."*

7. What would you say was the most useful portion of this program? *"I would say the most useful portion would be the ones on forgiveness, leaders, and the action plan."*

8. What would make the program better? "Can't think of anything."

Researcher's observation

The researcher observed that over the course of the eight-week program, Peter became more open to the discussion and less guarded during the formation groups. The researcher assumed that Peter was cautious of the program at the beginning. This assumption was validated by Peter's exit interview. However, it is clear that after eight weeks Peter saw the importance of connecting to a church and to God while pursuing his college degree.

Significant Findings from Joshua's Journal

The first significant finding the researcher noted within Joshua's journal was his journal entry for week two. The second week of spiritual formation meetings focused on God's role in the educational process. The following quote is from Joshua's journal for week two of the program.

> I vow to thank God for all he's done, is doing and will do in my life. I will always acknowledge his presence and blessings in all that I do. I will always pray for help and guidance in my studies and on tests. I will remember that with Christ, I can do all things so I will try to not doubt what I can do because of who is inside of me. He has all knowledge and wisdom so acknowledging his power gives me wisdom. Dear Lord, Please help me to remember you in the midst of my schoolwork and in every aspect of my life. I know things get complicated and confusing during the week, but allow my mind to stay fixed on you. Even though school can get hectic at times, it is more important that you are central in my life. In your word, it says to seek first the kingdom of heaven and all other things will be added and I believe you for that. So help me to give you all the glory for everything in my life. Amen. This week's group discussion was definitely relevant to my experience this week. I could relate the aspects of our discussion to what happened in the classroom this week. I had to thank God for my successes and also petition him for help with some things I was struggling with. I acknowledged God's presence in my studies every step of the way, through the ups and the downs.[3]

This journal entry was interesting to the researcher because it reflected a deep-rooted sense of God's presence and power in his life. Joshua's journal entry for week two serves as a great example of the researcher's effort. It seems as if the discussion on wisdom and knowledge as it relates to God was paramount for Joshua. His entry acknowledges the reality that life is challenging and confusing. However, God is well able to keep us focused on God.

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[3]Journal entry for week two of Joshua's journal.

The second journal entry that caught the attention of the researcher was Joshua's entry for week seven. Week seven of the program deal with action planning and the developing of SMART goals. The following quote is from Joshua's journal for week seven of the program.

> Based on this week's discussion, I vow to set SMART goals for myself from now on. I plan to write down and plan out my future. Once things are close to completion, I will sit down and re-evaluate my plans. I will not be too simple in my planning, but not so unattainable, that I will not be able to achieve them. I hope to find a balance in my goal-setting that allows me to challenge myself, but to remain realistic as well. I vow to hold myself accountable to my goals by following up on the things I have written down. I will be persistent in striving to reach my goals. Dear Lord, I really need your help in staying focused on not only reaching my goals, but also planning them out. I realize that without you, I can do nothing, but with you all things are possible. Help me to have a spirit of persistence, determination, and organization in my daily life. Lord, let me be like Paul and forget the things which are behind, reach forth unto the things which are before, and press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling in you. Give me the endurance to press on even when things get tough. In your name, Amen. This week's discussion was evident in my planning of the week. I went into this week with a drawn up plan for most of my classes, organizations, and other things. It helps a lot to visually see what needs to be done so that you can plan on the best strategy to complete everything. I find myself writing a lot more down now, and I definitely see the positive results. I hope and pray that it continues for me.[4]

The researcher was intrigued by this journal entry because it seemed as if Joshua was truly changed through the activity and the discussion of week seven. Joshua's affirmation stated that he vowed to set SMART goals from now on. His entry shows a definite change in behavior. He states that he will write things down more and re-evaluate goals according.

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[4]Journal entry from week seven of Joshua's journal.

Exit Interview for Joshua

1. What were your thoughts coming into this program? *"I thought that it would a chance to learn more about God, myself, and others. I felt that this program would benefit me by allowing me to integrate my studies with other aspects of my life."*

2. What are your thoughts leaving the program? *"I feel like I've learned a lot throughout the whole process. I am happy I took the time out to participate in such an intellectual study."*

3. Has the program changed or confirmed your perception about the role spirituality plays in the life of your education? If so, please describe the change. *"If anything, it has confirmed my perception about spirituality's role in my education. It has reaffirmed to me things like leadership; goal-setting and identity are all related to God and the part He plays in our lives."*

4. Do you feel you gained anything from participating in this program? If so, what? *"I gained more of a push to continue striving for excellence in life and the life of my studies. All these discussions prepared me to take my studies to the next level."*

5. Based on completing this program what do you think you will do differently? *"I will be more of a leader and also write down things more because I know the importance of doing so."*

6. If this program were offered again, would you participate? Would you invite other to participate? Why or why not? *"I would definitely participate again because I had such a good time the first time around. I would invite more people to enhance the conversation."*

7. What would you say was the most useful portion of this program? *"The most useful portion was the action plan."*

8. What would make the program better? *"More people in the groups to have more perspectives."*

Researcher's observation

Based on Joshua's answers to the exit interview questions, it is clear that Joshua saw the program as practical and a good use of his time. Throughout the program, Joshua exhibited a strong Christian connection. As a result, the program reaffirmed some beliefs he already had. However, the program did give him additional tools to be successful in life. These tools include; the need to write things down, to need to give God the glory in all that he does and to strive for excellence. The researcher agrees with Joshua's critique of the program in terms of having more students. The more students in the program the possibility of more perspectives increases. However, the researcher believes that the limited number of students provided an intimate setting and was sufficient for the purpose of this study.

When asked what he would do differently because of his involvement with the program, Joshua response shows personal growth. He stated that he will be more of a leader and write things down more. It appears as though Joshua experienced confirmation as well as transformation throughout the eight week program. The researcher noted that Joshua continued to visit Elon First Baptist Church after the program ended.

Significant Findings from James' Journal

The significant finding from James journal was his entry for week seven. Again, week seven of the program dealt with action planning and the developing of SMART goals. The following quote is from James' journal for week seven of the program.

> I need to keep my goals in check and try my hardest to set goals. I need to follow my goals and become a judge. Since I have set my goals, becoming a judge should be a little easier. I vow to become a judge. Dear God please help me become a judge and fulfill my

> goals. God help me stay in school and fulfill my dreams. I believe if I keep my faith in you I can do anything. This week's discussion is relevant because I learned the importance of writing down my goals. I took charge of my goal and assigned an advisor who has many political friends. My major is political science. I am one step closer to being a judge.[5]

The researcher believes this entry illuminates a change in behavior because the student described a moment of learning. He stated in his journal that he learned the importance of writing down his goals. The researcher noted that James believes that because of this discussion and the goals that he set, he is one step closer to being a judge.

Exit Interview for James

1. What were your thoughts coming into this program? *"I thought the program would help before for college. I am a freshman, so I thought it would help me for the future."*

2. What are your thoughts leaving the program? *"I enjoyed the program because I have set goals, I have learned how to forgive, I have learned how to help others."*

3. Has the program changed or confirmed your perception about the role spirituality plays in the life of your education? If so, please describe the change. *"Yes, God helps us in College and God's help is what college students need."*

4. Do you feel you gained anything from participating in this program? If so, what? *"Yes, the teachings and goal setting helped me a lot."*

5. Based on completing this program what do you think you will do differently? *"I will plan more, pray more and ask God to help me in my studies."*

6. If this program were offered again, would you participate? Would you invite other to participate? Why or why not? *"Yes, I would and I would invite others. The program was well made. It's successful."*

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[5]Journal entry from week seven of James' journal.

7. What would you say was the most useful portion of this program? *"The discussion on Goal setting."*

8. What would make the program better? *"More people."*

Researcher's Observation

James was a quiet participant in the group. He didn't talk much during the weekly session. His journal entries were short. However, his entry for week seven seemed to be one that suggested a benefit in the participating in the group. Based on his participation with the group he stated that he will plan more, pray more and ask God to help him with his studies. This was the desired outcome that the researcher hoped the studies would have.

Significant Findings from Andrew's Journal

The first significant finding from Andrew's journal was his entry for week two. Again the focus of week two was, understanding God's role in their educational journal. The following quote comes directly from Andrew's journal.

> My affirmation this week to do well at is school because this opportunity has been given to me by God. God, I thank you for giving me the opportunity to learn at this level. It is because of you that I'm here today. It is because of you that this school existed. Help me to do my best to honor you. This week's bible study and discussion was helpful because it allowed me to understand that God opened the door for me to be at school. It was God who led me to the right financial aid people. It was God who caused me to be admitted into this school. I didn't have the best grades in high school but God has given me another chance.[6]

This entry was significance for the researcher because Andrew's journal reflects an extreme amount of thanksgiving toward God. It appeared that based on the discussion

[6]Journal entry from week seven of Andrew's journal.

Andrew saw it necessary to credit God for his arrival at the university. This was exactly the goal the researcher had in mind when developing the program.

The second significant find from Andrew's journal was his entry for week six. During week six of the program the focus was the Community panel discussion. The following quote comes directly from Andrew's journal.

> My affirmation for this week is to be the change I wish to see. God, you have created me. I know that you want me to be great and to do great things. Our community is hurting. Yet, there are still go things that are going on. Help me to be a part of the good and not the bad. The community forum was relevant to my campus experience because the discussion dealt with real issues of education, family, and social evils. While the discussion was great, I hope we as a people can do more than just talk. I long for the day when we our words become actions.[7]

This entry was significant for the researcher because Andrew's entry reflects both sense of pride but also a sense of frustration. He is proud that good things are happening and that God has created him. However, his entry reflections frustration in that after all of the talking he has seen little action. It appears that the community panel sparks something within Andrew to take the community discussion to a level of community action. The researcher believes that Andrew is a leader and his journal entry supports that belief.

Exit Interview for Andrew

1. What were your thoughts coming into this program? *"I wasn't really sure what the program was going to be about. I signed up because I was interested and willing to learn something new."*

2. What are your thoughts leaving the program? *"I enjoyed the program, the fellowship, the talks and the learning. I'm glad I joined the program."*

3. Has the program changed or confirmed your perception about the role spirituality plays in the life of your education? If so,

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[7]Journal entry for week six from Andrew's journal.

please describe the change. *"The program confirmed more than it changed. Most of the things covered I already believed or knew. However, the community event helped me to see that spirituality plays a role in my education."*

4. Do you feel you gained anything from participating in this program? If so, what? *"I gained a greater awareness of issues that impact the black community. I gained a better knowledge base on God and the Bible."*

5. Based on completing this program what do you think you will do differently? *"I'm coming to church more often. I realize that as a Christian I need to be more committed to coming worship."*

6. If this program were offered again, would you participate? Would you invite other to participate? Why or why not? *"Yes! It is important for young positive black men to come together and support each other."*

7. What would you say was the most useful portion of this program? *"The community discussion panel."*

8. What would make the program better? *"It's a great program!"*

Researcher's Observation

The researcher noted that Andrew was very active in the program. Based on his journal entries and his exit interview, there appear to be changes in his thinking and behavior. He stated in his interview that he would attend church more. The researcher noted that Andrew has continued to come to worship after the program ended.

Significant Findings from John's Journal

The most significant finding the researcher noted within John's journal is his journal entry for week five. The discussion for week five dealt with leadership. The following quote comes directly from John's journal.

> Based on this week's discussion on leadership; I will go the second extra mile to be a servant leader. Dear Lord, give me the ability to

> have a better understanding of servant action leadership. Also, God help me show other leaders by my example of a servant leader and not me just following the worldly leader. The best servant leader model is Jesus Christ. This week's lesson is relevant in my leadership experience inside and outside the classroom.[8]

This journal entry was significant because John seemed to grasp the notion of being a servant leader. A servant leader is one who views their role as a chief servant. They are to service and not to be served.

Exit Interview For John

1. What were your thoughts coming into this program? *"I thought it would be an opportunity to reach a better understanding of my relationship with God and academics."*

2. What are your thoughts leaving the program? *"My thoughts leaving the program are that I have to challenge myself to correct my spiritual growth and academics."*

3. Has the program changed or confirmed your perception about the role spirituality plays in the life of your education? If so, please describe the change. *"Yes, I understand that having a better understanding of my spiritual life makes my role in education clear."*

4. Do you feel you gained anything from participating in this program? If so, what? *"Yes, I gained an understanding of now when I read the bible and heart the word I see how it relates to my academics."*

5. Based on completing this program what do you think you will do differently? *"Evaluate my spiritual growth more often and see how academics relate with my spiritual growth."*

6. If this program were offered again, would you participate? Would you invite other to participate? Why or why not? *"Yes, I would invite other brothers to engage in the heart of the dialogue and grow. I think it would increase a closer bond with other black men."*

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[8]Journal entry from week five of John's journal.

7. What would you say was the most useful portion of this program? *"The goal setting and leadership session were helpful."*

8. What would make the program better? *"Having 1 or 2 open sessions to discuss issues or hot topics."*

Researcher's Observation

The researcher was somewhat disappointed in John's journal entries. John was extremely vocal during the group sessions and was active in all other activities regarding the program. However, his journal entries were very short and did not provide sufficient insight into his thinking. His exit interview shows that he is consciously attempting to make the connection between his scholastic work and his spiritual development. The researcher noted that John continued to visit the church after the program ended. This is a positive observation. John had no knowledge of the Elon First Baptist Church prior to entering the program.

Significant Findings from Paul's Journal

The first significant finding noted by the researcher from Paul's journal was his entry for week one. Week one of the formation group meetings dealt with *Brotherly Unity.* The following quote comes directly from Paul's journal.

> I vow to begin thinking deeper about how to address the issues and conflicts that blind and divide the black community. I vow to work hard at my studies because I always will remember that how I do at this institution can either give another opportunity to another black male or strip that opportunity away. I pray to God that I can find some way to ease the strife and struggles of your Children Lord. I feel that there should not be a reason why they should have to suffer. This week's formation group opened my ears to hear more people when they speak. I feel that I have limited myself to a

> degree by not allowing others to speak. I feel that being a leader, part of that is being a great listener so I am working on that.[9]

Paul's journal entry for week one reflects a change in behavior and thinking. The discussion during week one's formation group focused on the need for unity within African American communities, particularly African American males. Based on Paul's entry, it seems that his contribution toward brotherly unity would involve him improving his listening skills. Based on the discussion and the bible study, Paul was able to see that he has limited himself by not letting others speak and listening to what they have to say. Paul's journal entry for week one also illuminates his desire to do well in class. Based on the bible study and discussion on brotherly unity, Paul vowed to work hard in the classroom. It seems that Paul views his performance academically as a key that can open the door for more African American to gain access to the institution or as one that that locks others out.

Exit Interview for Paul

1. What were your thoughts coming into this program? *"I thought the program would teach me more about the church and being a better man."*

2. What are your thoughts leaving the program? *"I'm glad I came. I learned a lot through this program."*

3. Has the program changed or confirmed your perception about the role spirituality plays in the life of your education? If so, please describe the change. *"It definitely opened my eyes to a lot of different things. I didn't realize how much the bible spoke to everyday life situations. I learned that God is very concerned about my success on campus and he has giving me the ability to think and has opened the door for me to be here."*

4. Do you feel you gained anything from participating in this program? If so, what? *"I have gained a better appreciation for prayer and writing things down."*

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[9]Journal Entry from week one of Paul's journal.

5. Based on completing this program what do you think you will do differently? *"I will definitely pray more and I will make a better effort to attend church more."*

6. If this program were offered again, would you participate? Would you invite other to participate? Why or why not? *"Yes, I would. This program is a good program. It helps brother come together. It also gives us a chance to get off campus and talk about things that are important to us."*

7. What would you say was the most useful portion of this program? *"I would say the bible study on forgiveness and the goal setting one were the most useful."*

8. What would make the program better? *"I think the program is fine the way it is."*

Researcher's Observation

Throughout the program Paul consistently demonstrated a passion for learning. He challenged himself to think differently. His journal entries reflect this. Paul often stated through the program that God had given him a brain and it was up to him to use it. Because of Paul passion for learning and dialogue, the researcher asked Paul to be a part of the community panel discussion which was of this program. Paul agreed and did an outstanding job. The researcher noted that Paul thinking as changed toward prayer and journaling. This appears to be a behavioral changed based on his participation with the group.

Significant Findings from Silas Journal

The most significant journal entry noted by the researcher was Silas' entry for week four. Week four of the program dealt with forgiveness. The following quote comes directly from Silas journal.

> I will forgive others because God has forgiven me. Jesus, help me to forgive other people. I have really had a hard time forgiving people. It seems that when I do, they just do the same thing again. Help me to forgive my classmates, myself and other people. This week's discussion was helpful to me because I just had a big disagreement with one of my friends at school. He continues to leave his things on my bed. I have asked him several times not do to this. This week's group meeting on forgiveness was helpful because it made me think about all the times God has forgiven me but I continue to do the same things.[10]

This entry was significant to the researcher because Silas' journal reflections a connection between his spiritual walk with God and his walk with others. Based on the discussion Silas was able to see that he should forgive others because God has forgiven him. His prayer acknowledges that this is an area of weakness for him. It seems that his time in the formation group meetings was helpful to him.

Exit Interview for Silas

1. What were your thoughts coming into this program? *"That is program who teach us about the bible and how the bible can help us with our school work."*

2. What are your thoughts leaving the program? *"I thought the program was good. Some of the bible study and group meetings are great. Some were not that useful only because I really didn't learn anything new during those times with the group. Overall it was good program."*

3. Has the program changed or confirmed your perception about the role spirituality plays in the life of your education? If so, please describe the change. *"Well, it didn't change it but it helped me to see it better. I already knew that God was with me but the program helped me to see how he was with him."*

4. Do you feel you gained anything from participating in this program? If so, what? *"I learned the importance of forgiveness."*

5. Based on completing this program what do you think you will do differently? *"I will forgive more."*

---

[10]Journal entry from week four of Silas journal.

6. If this program were offered again, would you participate? Would you invite other to participate? Why or why not? *"Yes. I would because this program gives good life principles that young men need,"*

7. What would you say was the most useful portion of this program? *"The one on forgiveness and the community dialogue night were the best part of the program for me."*

8. What would make the program better? *"More people!"*

Researcher's Observation

Silas seemed to be unsure of the program at first. During the first two or three formation group meetings he really didn't say much. However, toward the end of the program he became more vocal and more active in the discussion. The researcher noted that Silas did attend every weekly formation group and most of the Sunday morning services during the program. His journal entries were very short. This was a disappointment to the researcher.

Prior to the field experience the researcher of this work designed a program that had three primary areas of focus. First, to understand why African American males were not attending the church in which he served as pastor. Secondly, the program was designed to determine if students could see the value in connecting to a worshiping congregation while pursuing their academic study. Finally, the program sought to determine how the church could become an extension of the learning process. Based on the field experience, the researcher has modified the model design of the program. The modified design of the program puts equal responsibility for pastor and congregation to work closely with the students, faculty and staff members to evangelize and disciple the

African American male college students from a holistic approach. Based on the modified program model the researcher of this work recommends the following:

Discipleship

1. Identity faculty or staff members on campus who share the same passion of evangelism and discipleship. This is a critical step because the faculty and staff members of the university are the gatekeepers to the students. Once those persons have been identified, work closes with them as they will be able to help recruit students for the program.

2. Determined an appropriate group of students you wish to disciple. Eight to twelve students would be sufficient for weekly formation groups. The formation groups should include a time of personal sharing on behalf of the students, a bible study with a corresponding discussion, a meal and prayer. This formation group session should last no more than an hour and an half weekly (Appendix E).

3. Work with other leaders of the church and college age church members. They should be a part of the formation groups or have time with the students from the university throughout the program. This builds relationship and increases the interaction between the church and the university.

Evangelism

1. There should be multiple calendared evangelistic efforts that strategically target the campus or local university.

2. Invite the gospel choir of the University to the church to minister to the congregation on a Sunday morning. That Sunday morning worship service should be dedicated to the education enterprise. The sermon should have an educational component. African American staff or faculty could be recognized and appreciated on that day. This is considered sanctuary evangelism. After the service prepare a meal for the college students and other university guest. This would be a great time to share information concerning the church with them. This could become an annual event.

3. Poll the congregation to see if any members of the church work at the local university or college campus. If so, hold evangelism classes with them so that they can properly witness and share the

works of Christ on their job to other faculty, staff and student members.

4. Work with the religious life departments on campus. Determine if the university has a database of churches that they give to students. Make sure the church is listed and all information is accurate.

5. Send weekly emails to students reminding them of worship and provide transportation. Many college students do not have their own vehicles.

6. Work with religious life, Greek organizations, student leader organization and inform them that the church and church leaders are available to facilitate events on campus when the necessary.

7. Increase visibility on the college campus. Work with student services groups on campus to become a community partner. Most student most complete community services hours. Position the church so that it becomes a community partner in this regard.

BECOME AN EXTENSION OF THE LEARNING PROCESS

1. Host a community panel in partnership with the university and community leaders. This keeps your church on the University's radar. The university will begin to see the church as an institution of change within the community. This is also a creative way to evangelize. Persons may attend the church for a community panel who might not ever attend for worship. This too could become an annual event.

2. Offer internship through the church in partnership with a department on campus. Many times universities are looking for new community partnerships and creative settings for students to learn in. The church can become an extension of the learning process by providing internships (Appendix C).

Based on the result of the field study the researcher saw an improvement in the number of African American males who received ministry support from Elon First Baptist Church. The researcher credits these results to the evangelism efforts outlined, the formation groups and the churches ability to become an extension of the learning process. The church was able to realize this improvement because the church provided meaningful

ministry to the students. The researcher came to the conclusion that College students, particularly African American men must have a compelling reason to worship with any local congregation and proximity is not a compelling reason. However, effective ministry and relationship building is.

APPENDIX A

FOCUS GROUP SURVEY

APPENDIX A
Focus Group Survey

FOCUS GROUP SURVEY

Connecting Sacred and Scholastic Communities:

Evangelizing and Discipling African American Males on the College Campuses

The objective of this survey is to create a program that will encourage African-American males to finish their academic pursuit. Our goal is to establish a evangelism and discipleship program in partnership with the church and the college, so that the African-American male student population has a greater chance to produce other student leaders and integrate faith with scholastic study. In addition, the program will allow an extension of the learning process and serve as an encouraging component for you to obtain your college degree.

Administered by:
Elon First Baptist Church

SECTION I: BACKGROUND

1) Are you an in-state or out-of-state student?

_____

_____

2) Please indicate your home city and state.

_____

_____

3) What is your family structure?

- o Single Parent Home
- o Both Parents reside in the home

Other: (please explain)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

4) Are you a first generation college student?
   - o Yes
   - o No

5) Was it your decision to attend college?
   - o Yes
   - o No

Other: (please explain)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

6) Why are you attending college?

- o Family Tradition
- o Athletic Scholarship
- o Next step after high school

Other: (please explain)

_____

_____

_____

_____

7) What prompted your decision to attend a predominately white college as opposed to a historically black college?

_____

_____

_____

_____

8) Did you participate in extra-curricular activities during high school?
   - o Yes

- o No

If yes, please list activities: _____

_____

9) Are you receiving financial aid?
- o Yes
- o No

10) Are you receiving a scholarship?
- o Yes
- o No

If yes, what type:

_____

11) Do you have a part-time job (excluding work study)?
- o Yes
- o No

SECTION II: ACADEMIC

12) Are you currently on academic probation?
- o Yes
- o No

13) What is your GPA? _____

Do you have a faculty mentor?
- o Yes
- o No

If yes, is your mentor African-American? _____

14) Is there a presence of African-American mentors on campus?

_____

_____

15) What are your career goals?

Long Range:

Short Range:

Alternate Plan:

SECTION III: PERSONAL

16) Organizations: Please check all that apply to you and add those not listed.

- o Greek Affiliation(organization) _____
- o Athlete (sport) _____
- o Band

Other: _____

17) Are all of your friends African-American?

- o Yes
- o No

18) Do you have a diverse group of close friends?

- o Yes
- o No

19) Are all of your friends Caucasian?

- o Yes
- o No

SECTION IV: RELIGION

20) What is your religious affiliation?

_____

_____

21) What is your family's religious affiliation?

_____

_____

22) Were you active in your home church?

- o Yes
- o No

If yes, explain:

_____

_____

_____

_____

23) Do you attend church now?

- o Yes
- o No

If yes, are you a member? _____

If no, why don't you attend church?_____

_____

_____

_____

24) As a church member what ministries are you active in?

_____

_____

_____

_____

25) How often do you attend church?

1) Every Sunday
2) Once a month
3) Twice a month

26) In your opinion what role can the church play in your academic life?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

SECTION V: COLLEGE/CAMPUS EXPERIENCE

27) Would you agree that there are sufficient programs that address or facilitate the African-American experience at this college?

- o Yes
- o No

If your answer is no, what components are missing?

_____

_____

_____

_____

28) What programs are missing on campus that would aid in the development of the African- American student population on campus?

_____

_____

_____

_____

29) What cutting-edge activities are students in this generation looking for on college campuses?

_____

_____

_____

_____

30) Do you know of any African-American male students who are thinking about leaving or dropping out of college?

- o Yes
- o No

If yes, why?

_____

_____

_____

_____

31) Would you participate in a program designed to assist you in the completion of your academic pursuit as well as enhance your life management skills?

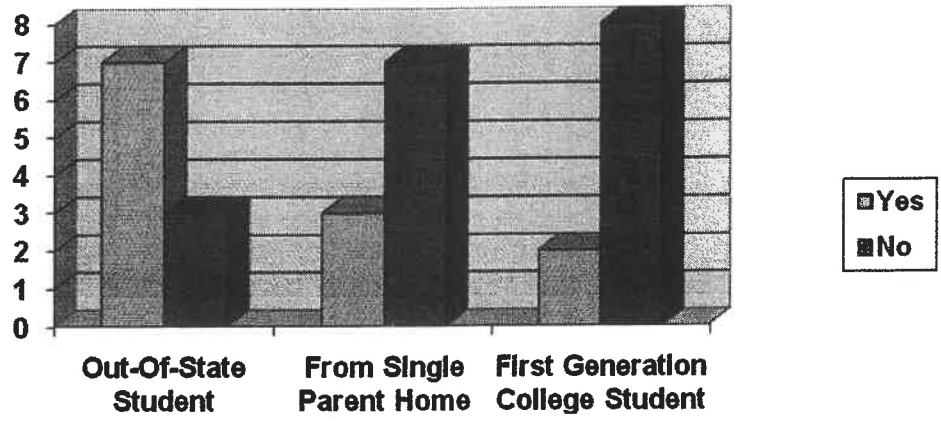
a. Yes

b. No

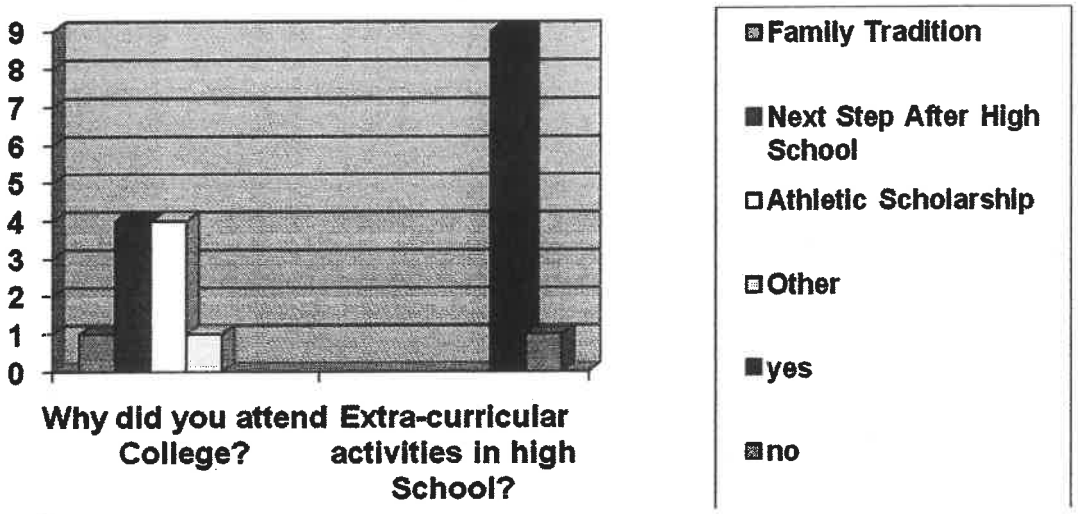
APPENDIX B

RESULTS FROM FOCUS GROUP SURVEY

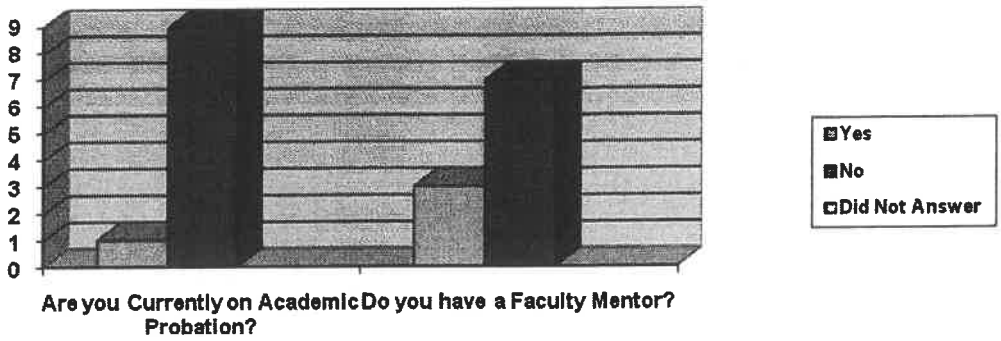
APPENDIX B
RESULTS FROM FOCUS GROUP SURVEY
(BACKGROUND)



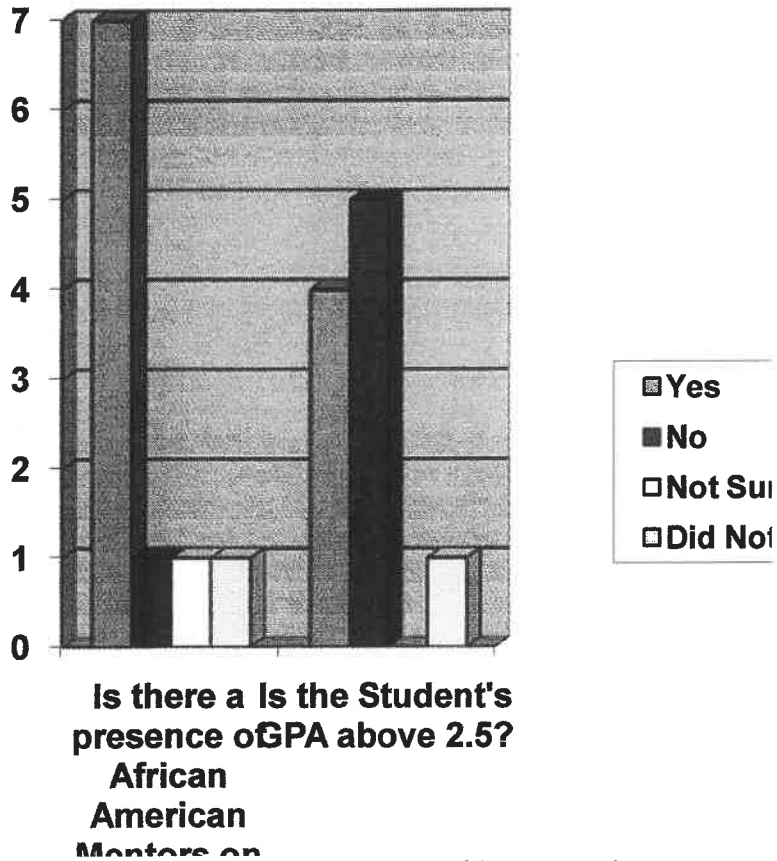
RESULTS FROM FOCUS GROUP SURVEY
(BACKGROUND)



RESULTS FROM FOCUS GROUP SURVEY
(ACADEMIC)

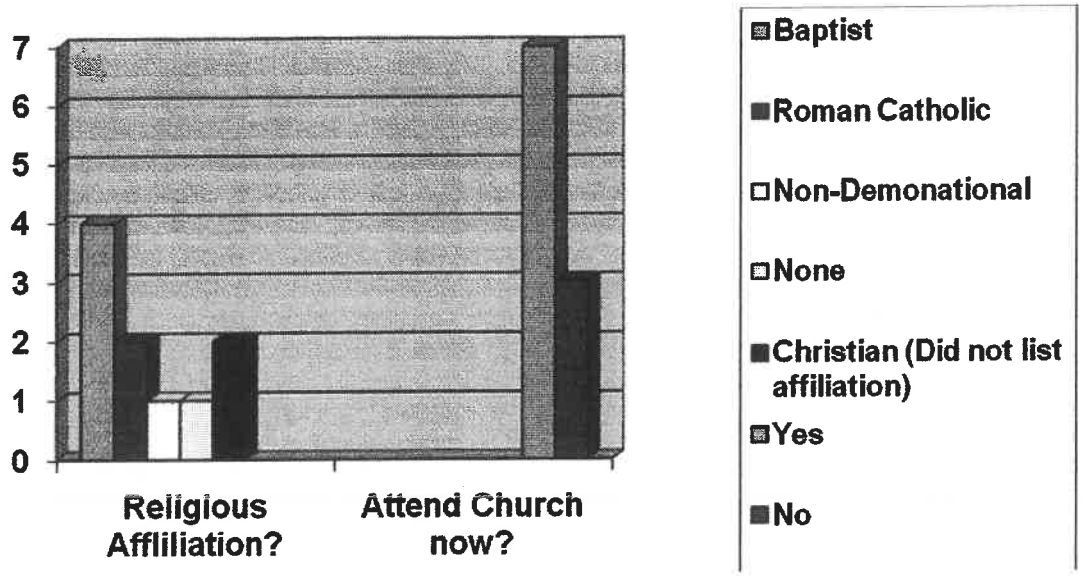


RESULTS FROM FOCUS GROUP SURVEY
(ACADEMIC)

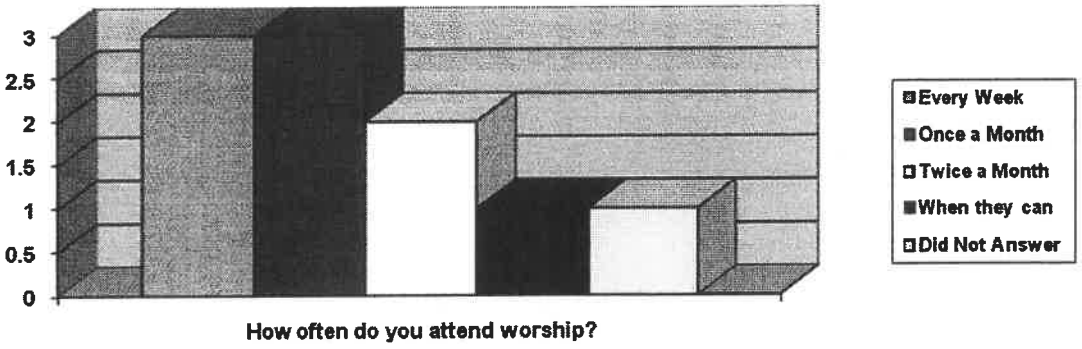


Note: While 7 out of 10 students said there is a presence of African American mentors on the campus, 5 of them stated that there was not enough of them. As a result, 8 of the 10 students surveyed said that they needed access to be more African American mentors.

RESULTS FROM FOCUS GROUP SURVEY
(RELIGION)

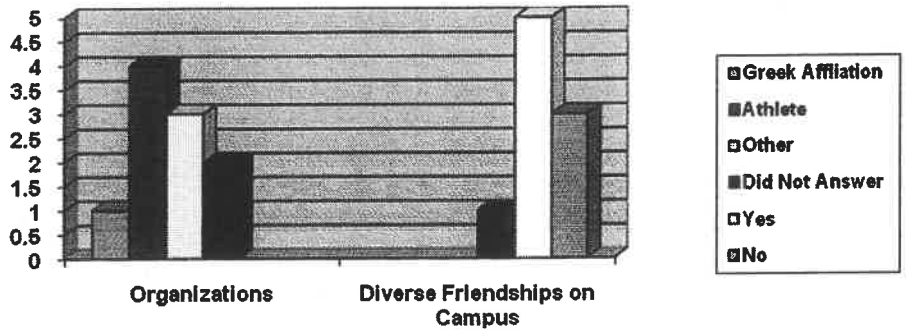


RESULTS FROM FOCUS GROUP SURVEY
(RELIGION)



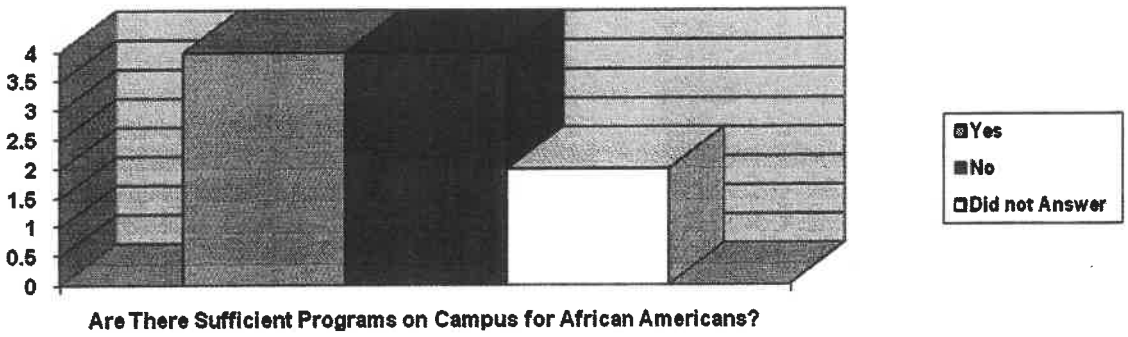
Note: One of the students stated they had lost connection with the institution of the church but have maintained faith in God. One student stated that they did not grow up going to church. One student stated that they go to church when they can.

RESULTS FROM FOCUS GROUP SURVEY
(PERSONAL)



Note: Students who selected other were members of the choir and/or various leadership programs on campus.

RESULTS FROM FOCUS GROUP SURVEY
(CAMPUS EXPERIENCE)



APPENDIX C

ELON FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES FALL INTERNSHIP 2009

APPENDIX C

Elon First Baptist Church
African American Studies
Fall Internship
2009

Overview

The internship will create opportunities for research and learning through the process of doing. The internship will be offered through Elon First Baptist Church in conjunction with Elon University's Truitt Center for Religious Life and the African/African-American Studies program, and will require full immersion within the faith community for the duration of the internship. The selected intern (s) will be responsible for helping the immediate congregation and others within the larger faith community to integrate their faith with various issues of civic engagement.

Background

- Elon First Baptist Church

Elon First Baptist Church is located at the very center of the Morgan Place Community. It is the oldest African American congregation within the town of Elon, NC. A former slave, John McMullen began the first African American Church in the town of Elon, NC at the turn of the 20th century and it quickly became symbol of freedom and hope for the community. With a growing membership of over 340 in a town with a population of less than 7,000 Elon First Baptist Church is one the fastest growing churches in all of Alamance County and stands as the heartbeat of the African American community in Elon, NC.

Elon First Baptist Church is a church determined to make a difference through good news and good works. It is our belief that churches that impact communities are churches that are involved in some form of outreach. Therefore, we at Elon First Baptist understand the importance of horizontal ministry and we continue to look for innovative ways to minister to the social needs of our community.

- Elon University

Elon University is a private liberal arts university a few blocks down the street from Elon First Baptist Church. The university is a major part of the town. As a matter of fact, that town was called "Elon College" up until 2001. It was during this same year that the college became a university and the town officially changed its name to "Elon."

The university was founded by the Christian Church (now the United Church of Christ) in 1889. "The local Christian assembly committed themselves to erect an institution for higher learning. In 1889, the establishment relocated an old school known as Graham Normal College to a heavily wooded area full of large oak trees."[1] <https://email.elon.edu/exchange/aaase/Drafts/RE:%20Internship%20\(Pathways%20to%20leadership\).EML\?Cmd=reply&Create=0#_ftn1> This group understood that

"Elon" was actually Hebrew for "Oak". As a consequence, the name Elon College was given. Today the university functions with a mission to transform mind, body, and spirit while encouraging freedom of thought and liberty of conscience. According to the University website, this mission is fulfilled in the following four ways.

A. To nurture a rich intellectual community characterized by active student engagement with a faculty dedicated to excellent teaching and scholarly accomplishment.

B. To provide a dynamic and challenging undergraduate curriculum grounded in the traditional liberal arts and sciences and complemented by distinctive professional and graduate programs.

C. To integrate learning across the disciplines and put knowledge into practice, thus preparing students to be global citizens and informed leaders motivated by concern for the common good.

D. To foster respect for human differences, passion for life of learning, personal integrity, and an ethic of work and service.

- Community project

The community project will be a two summit entitled "Black America: It takes a village". The community summit will call on religious and community leaders along with university faculty and staff members to discuss a leadership model for African American males. This will be a two-day summit that will take place at Elon First Baptist Church and the campus of Elon University. God has designed us to be social creatures. Therefore, we must understand the great blessing of communal learning. Community, not competition, should be the goal of our learning. Obtaining knowledge is a communal act.

The combination of Christian theology and scholastic study has much to contribute toward diagnosing what hampers the realization of a just society. Theology within itself is both an academic discipline and a practical responsibility of the church. The university is the premier institution for secular development. The goal of the university is to prepare men and women for professional service in the community. Colleges and universities are supposed to be strongholds of rationality, dispensing knowledge and cheering its application. The church is the premier institution for Christian development. It is a place of spiritual refreshment. It is the place where we are engaged by the very presence and power of God. If there is a greater connection between the institution that fosters secular development and the institution which fosters spiritual development, this creates the greatest environment for human development.

Strategic Intent

The intended impact of this internship is two fold. The first intent is to help those within the faith community to integrate their faith with social awareness and social involvement. The second intent is to facilitate a dialogue of learning between the University and the faith community in reference to civic engagement. The success of the internship will be based upon receiving approval from a faculty member of Elon University, approval from the leadership of Elon First Baptist Church and the participation of African American male student (s). The implementation of this internship helps to educate the larger community of the University's interest in African American studies, to create interest and dialogue in regards to community commitments and to provide a practical learning experience for the student.

- Theory of Change

The goal of the program is to encourage scholastic excellence, to provide spiritual formation and to create a model for leadership that students can exhibit to others on campus in a post modern culture. The theological dimension of education is an anthropological dimension, and attention to these dimensions makes for excellent, effective learning. The desired theory of change is to produce an atmosphere for the University and the Church to be engaged in dialogue. This will be achieved in the following five ways:

1. Written articles published in the Elon First Baptist quarterly newsletter.
2. Weekly information provided to congregation concerning issues within the community or country that impact African Americans males.
3. Facilitate efforts related to the identity formation groups
4. Attend worship services on a regular basis
5. Coordinate community project

Internship solution

The internship will last for a period of 10 weeks beginning September 20th 2009 - November 29th 2009. Within this timeframe, the intern (s) will work on the initiatives listed above.

1. EFB Quarterly Newsletter

Student (s) will be responsible for writing an article that will be printed in the EFB quarterly newsletter and reproduced in The Black Oaks Newsletter. This article should focus on issues related to African Americans on campus and their involvement with the church.

2. Weekly Information

Each week the student will educate the congregation concerning issues within the community or country that impact African Americans and particularly African American males. This information will be communicated during morning worship service. The student (s) should plan to speak approximately five minutes each Sunday.

3. Assist in Facilitating Identity formation group meetings
The student will work with the leadership of the church in coordinating an identity formation group. The purpose of this group is to create an opportunity to mentor students, to design a model of leadership that can be carried back to their learning community and encourage scholastic excellence and human development.

4. Attend Worship Services on a regular basis
The internship will require full immersion into the worship community. This is an important piece in drawing participation for the activities mentioned above. This is also necessary to help the congregation integrate their faith with issues of civic engagement. Full immersion, simply means attending worship and/or bible study. Worship services are held at 8:45am and 10:45am on Sunday mornings. Bible study is held at 7:30pm on Wednesday nights.

5. Coordinate efforts related to community project (Black America: It Takes a village Community discussion panel)

This community effort will involve university faculty, staff, area pastors and community leaders along with students for the purpose of developing African American Leaders for the 21st Century. The internship will require coordinating this event with church and university leadership.

6. Meet with the faculty internship coordinator twice monthly and at least once weekly with the internship supervisor to discuss the experience and progress.

V. Financial Resources

Students will earn a stipend of $725 administered over the ten-week period

APPENDIX D

PRE-SURVEY & POST-SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

APPENDIX D

PRE-SURVEY & POST-SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Connecting Sacred and Scholastic Communities:

Evangelizing and Discipling African American Males on the College Campuses

SECTION I: PERSONAL & ACADEMIC

1. Do you keep a personal journal?

- o Yes
- o No

2. Do you recite daily affirmations?

- o Yes
- o No

1. How often do you study?

- o Daily
- o Once a Week
- o Three times a week
- o Right before a test
- o Other:_____

SECTION II: RELIGION

2. Do you have any religious affiliations? If so what are they?

_____

_____

_____

3. Do you currently attend church?

- o Yes
- o No

If yes, what church do you currently attend and are you a member?

_____

_____

If no, is there a specific reason why you do not attend church?_____

_____

4. How often do you attend church?
   - o Every week
   - o Once a month
   - o Twice a month
   - o Whenever time permits

5. Do you pray daily?
   - o Yes
   - o No

6. How often do you read religious material or scripture?
   - o Never
   - o Sometimes
   - o Often
   - o Frequently

7. What is your current connection to Elon First Baptist Church?
   - o No connection
   - o Somewhat connected
   - o Well connected

8. How would you rate you current knowledge of Elon First Baptist Church?
   - o Extremely limited
   - o Limited
   - o I have a basic knowledge
   - o Very knowledgeable

APPENDIX E

EFB FORMATION GROUP

APPENDIX E
EFB FORMATION GROUP
Understanding, Preparing For and Practicing Christian Worship
Outline
Week one

- **Opening:**

Leader: Peace be unto you
Group: And also with you

- **Scripture lesson: Psalm 133 "Brotherly unity"**

Verse 1 - It is blessing when men can come together without fighting.
Verse 2- It produces a good atmosphere. This atmosphere is enjoyed not only by the men but by their friends, families and the larger community. It runs or flows through the body (people).
Verse 3 – It is like dew. Dew is water that comes on the ground at night. It makes plants grow when there is no rain.

- **How are you coming to today's formation group meeting?**

Describe your thoughts or emotions based on today's events.

- **Group discussion and lunch/dinner**

What are some things that hinder unity within the black community? How can African American men live better together? How does your educational journey contribute toward unity within society?

- **Prayer:**

Tell the group at least one thing you would like the group to pray for.

- **Dismissal:**

Leader: Peace of Christ be with you
Group: And also with you

EFB FORMATION GROUP
Outline
Week Two

- **Opening:**

Leader: Peace be unto you
Group: And also with you

- **Scripture lesson: "God's Role in your education"**

Proverbs 9:10 "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight." - This passage of scripture reminds us that the fear (reverence) of God is the beginning of wisdom. It also states that having knowledge of God gives one insight. The verse allows us to see that wisdom and knowledge belong to God. However, they are giving to us when we worship, adore and respect God.

Philippians 4:13 "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." - This passage of scripture reminds us that all things are possible. God has given us strength to complete the tasks and the assignments that are before us. With God's help you can do all things.

- **How are you coming to today's formation group meeting?**

Describe your thoughts or emotions based on today's events.

- **Group discussion and lunch/dinner**

What is the difference between knowledge and wisdom? In what ways has God helped you in your studies? In what ways have you shown reverence unto God concerning your studies? Do you believe that God placed you on this campus? If so, why? Do you find it difficult to express your faith and love for God on campus? What are some of areas that you need God to strengthen you in?

- **Prayer:**

Tell the group at least one thing you would like the group to pray for.

- **Dismissal:**

Leader: Peace of Christ be with you
Group: And also with you

EFB FORMATION GROUP
Outline
Week Three

- **Opening:**

Leader: Peace be unto you
Group: And also with you

- **Scripture lesson: Redefining Black manhood**

Genesis 1:26-27 "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."

Proverbs 23:7 "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he"

- **How are you coming to today's formation group meeting?**

Describe your thoughts or emotions based on today's events.

- **Group discussion and lunch/dinner**

In your opinion what is the typical image of an African American male? Is that image accurate or is it a distorted image? If it is a distorted image, how did it get this way, and what can we do to change it? Describe some of things that have influenced your view of manhood? What opportunities to do you have to redefine black manhood?

- **Prayer:**

Tell the group at least one thing you would like the group to pray for.

- **Dismissal:**

Leader: Peace of Christ be with you
Group: And also with you

EFB FORMATION GROUP
Outline
Week Four

Opening:
Leader: Peace be unto you
Group: And also with you

- **Scripture lesson: Forgiveness**

Mark 2:2-12 And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them, no, not so much as about the door: and he preached the word unto them. And they come unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four. And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay. When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee. But there was certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only? And immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts? Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house. And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion.

- **How are you coming to today's formation group meeting?**

Describe your thoughts or emotions based on today's events.

- **Group discussion and lunch/dinner**

How easy is it for you to forgive? It what ways have you seen the destructive power of unforgiveness?

There are 4 compelling and biblical reasons why you should forgive:

1. You should forgive because God has forgiven you:
2. You should forgive because when you fail to do so you become a person you don't want to be:
3. You should forgive because holding a grudge can ruin your life
4. You should forgive because not forgiving destroys other relationships.

- **Prayer:**

Tell the group at least one thing you would like the group to pray for.

- **Dismissal:**

Leader: Peace of Christ be with you
Group: And also with you

EFB FORMATION GROUP
Outline
Week Five

Opening:
Leader: Peace be unto you
Group: And also with you

- **Scripture lesson: Leadership**

Exodus 18:17-18, 21-22 "And Moses' father in law said unto him, The thing that thou doest is not good. Thou wilt surely wear away, both thou, and this people that is with thee: for this thing is too heavy for thee; thou art not able to perform it thyself alone…Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness, and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. And let them judge the people at all seasons; and it shall be, that every great matter they shall bring unto thee, but every small matter they shall judge: so shall it be easier for thyself, and they shall bear the burden with thee."

Matthew 20:27 "And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant. Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

- **How are you coming to today's formation group meeting?**

Describe your thoughts or emotions based on today's events.

- **Group discussion and lunch/dinner**

What are some of the qualities of a good leader? According to Jesus, leaders are really servants do you agree? Do you consider yourself to be a leader? How does your educational journey prepare you to be a leader or a better leader? Who are some of the leaders you admire and why? As an African American man do you feel that there is sufficient leadership with the black community? If we had a new wave of leaders, within the next five years would Black America be different? When was the last night you found yourself in a leadership position? Do you believe that leaders are born, created or both?

- **Prayer:**

Tell the group at least one thing you would like the group to pray for.

- **Dismissal:**

Leader: Peace of Christ be with you
Group: And also with you

APPENDIX F

COLLEGE DAY SERMON

APPENDIX F

College Day Sermon
"I'm reaching for something Greater!"

Text: Philippians 3:4-11

Proverbs 1:7 reads, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of Knowledge but fools despise wisdom and instruction." As we have gathered here today to celebrate Christ and to celebrate the gift of academic study, it is necessary that we consider this proverb in light of our Philippians text. We must consider this proverb because like Paul, the writer of the proverb understood the role that God plays in the life of any person who seeks knowledge and instruction. For the most part, most people who seek understanding and instruction do so because there is a certain ambition in their heart. That is to say, that most people educate themselves because there is something greater that they want to accomplish in their life. There is nothing wrong with being ambitious.

It was Emerson who said, "Without ambition one starts nothing. Without work one finishes nothing. The prize will not be sent to you. You have to win it. The man who knows how will always have a job. The man who also knows why will always be his boss." There is nothing wrong with being ambitious. To be ambitious simply means that there is a strong desire for advancement. The writer of the proverb as well as Paul, encouraged the desire for advancement as long as the main thing stayed the main thing.

The truth of the matter is we live in an ambition driven society. From our youth up we are thought and we are cultured to be ambitious. We are taught to dream dreams, to make plans and to set goals. As teenagers we were encouraged to go to school to prepare ourselves to live in society and be well educated so that we could compete in the marketplace. The middle age person desires to place themselves in a positive flow

posture so that when they retire they can enjoy the rest of the life. The well seasoned of life, often discovers that there is good living after retirement. Consequently, many times they decide that they are going to travel or to pick up a new hobby. All of these are good ambitions. All of these are things that many of us strive for and there is nothing wrong with being ambitious. However, the issue at hand is trying to understand what should be our chief ambition. This, my dear friends is the issue that Paul is wresting with in the text.

While Paul was a very ambition person, he understood that fact that although his resume was thick, he understood that the best things in life were not the material blessings in his hand or on his wall, but he understood that the best things about life often the things you cannot put your hand on. As a consequence he said, I have to press toward a higher calling in God. In other words, there are some accomplishments and achievements that are note worthy in his life, yet there is still something greater for him to do! And I want somebody in this room, to understand the fact that God has something great in store for your life! As a matter of a fact you were created to do great things!

Paul, in the text, has outlined some of his personal achievements. Yet, in outlining his achievements he still understood the fact that there was more that God wanted out his life. He's sayings in the text, that when you look at his resume, nobody has a better resume than his, but there is still something missing! He is building the case that we should never been satisfied with just social and economic status but there is something greater for our lives. He says, in verse five "I've got pedigree on my side". I come from a good and wealthy family. He says, I was "Circumcised on the eight day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin." In other words, he was born into a good

family! Benjamin was a tribe of prestige. Saul, the first king of Israel was from the tribe of Benjamin. He said, "I'm a Hebrew of Hebrews." What he was saying was his father and his mother were Hebrews. In short, he had no bad blood in his family! However, he understood that despite the fact that he came from a family with a good name that his family's name and his family's prestige could only take him so far! The problem with us today is the fact that often time we are.trying to ride on the success of somebody else's name! But I hear God saying to somebody in this room, "I'm going to make your name great!" Paul said, "I've got pedigree on my side!"

Not only could Paul boast about his pedigree but he could also boast about his education." He said, "as touching the law, a Pharisee." A Pharisee was a highly educated person. Paul was an educated man who studied in the University. He could speak several languages and he had studied under some of the greatest minds of his time! However, he realized that even his education as good as it was still limited. The truth of the matter is there are some things that a text book can't teach you.

He says in text, "Not only can I boast about my pedigree and my education but I can boast about my religion." He said, "Concerning Zeal, I persecuted the church, touching the righteousness which is in the law blameless." In other words, there was a time in Paul's life when I thought he had it all figured out. There was a time in his life when he thought he had God all figured! When it came to law there was nothing anyone could accuse him of.

But while he had pedigree, while he had education, while he had religion, he felt a strong desire for advancement! He felt that there was something greater for him to do with this life! And he understood the fact that while having a great last name could help,

while obtaining degrees could help, while have religion could help, Paul came to the realization that to have a personal relationship with Christ was his greatest achievement! I want somebody in this room to understand the simply fact that if you are going to walking the greatest that you were created to walk, in you must have Christ in your life! Having Christ in your life you should your chief ambition! Because through Christ you can do all things because he strengthens you! I want somebody in this room to understand the fact that God has strengthen you for something greater!

The first thing I want you to know about the text is that if you are reaching for something greater, you have to learn divine arithmetic. In other words, you have to learn how to count life, not from your perspective but from the perspective of God's word. Look at what he says in verses 7, "But what things were gained to me, those I counted loss for Christ." If you are going to reach for something greater, you have to learn divine arithmetic. You have to the count life from the perspective of God's word. He said, my resume looks good, but it is nothing in comparison to the knowledge that comes from seeing life the way God wants me to see it. My name, my education, my superficial religious presentations don't mean anything without seeing them from God's point of view. Can I help somebody? Jesus doesn't have a problem with you making good money, Jesus doesn't have a problem you living in a nice home, Jesus doesn't have a problem with you having a nice car. He just wants you to count it up right! When you understand divine arithmetic, you understand that things minus God equal nothing, but God plus things equals everything! Jesus put it this way, seek you first the kingdom of God and all these things will be added to you! Divine arithmetic means you have kept

the main thing the main thing! Divine Arithmetic means that Jesus is counted has your chief importance!

The Second thing I want you to know about the text is that if you are reaching for something greater, not only must learn divine arithmetic but you have must develop an awareness of the divine. In verse 10 he says "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings." That word "know" the text means knowledge gain through experience. A lot of people Christ intellectually, they know him historically, but Paul says I want to know intimately. Paul is saying I already know him from my Damacus experience, but I want to know him better. I want somebody in here to understand that you need to know Him because there are some things that you will encounter in this life that education can help you with! There are some things you will encounter in this life that your last name can't help you with! There are some problems you will face that your money can help you with! But when you know him, he can heal you when don't have money for the co-pay! When you know him, he can get you out of trouble! When you know him, he will walk with you and talk with you, and tell you, you are his own! When you feel like you are about to lose your mind, he can give me strength when I know him!

Paul said I want to him in the power of his resurrection. The resurrection of Christ is the greatest example of victory! His resurrection gives us power to face the problems of life victoriously. When Jesus was raised from the dead he was raised in victory! But the good news is when God raised Jesus from the dead God gave us resurrection power. The same power that raised Jesus from dead is in you and it is in me! When your child is in trouble, get to know the power of the resurrection! When you are

sick, get to know the power of the resurrection! When you get to a place where you feel like you can't make it, get to know the power of the resurrection!

The resurrection tells us that a set back is really just a set the stage for a come back! Paul said I want to know that kind of power! This is why we must learn how to give God glory for our story! Look at what he says in verse 12, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus." In other words, he saying it is not that I have already arrived in greatest. He saying I'm not there yet, but I'm working on it! He says, "I'm following after it!" In other words, even though I'm not perfect, I still know how to praise God because I'm not where I use to be! That's somebody's testimony. You can give God glory because you are not where you used to be.

The last point I want you to understand about the text is that if you are reaching for something greater, not only must you learn divine arithmetic, not only must develop an awareness of the divine, but you have to develop a divine amnesia! Paul says in verse 13-14, "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Paul realized that in order for him to reach for something better in life he had to be willing to forget what was behind him. He had to forget! There were some mistakes behind him that he had to forget about! There were some failures in his past that he needed to forget about! There were some issues in his yesterday that he needed to leave in his yesterday. We too, like Paul must be willing to let the past be the past. God has a better tomorrow for us all! If our past has been rough our future can be glorious!

The interesting thing about the text is the fact that Paul is not just talking about forgetting the negativity of his past. He is also talking about forgetting the good things that are in the past as well. In order for him to reach for greater things he has to be willing to let go of good things! He name was a good name. His family was a great family. His education was a good education. However, God has something great in store for him and Paul was willing to let go of the good in order to reach for the great! While there are good accomplishments in your past, God has more for you to do. Your best accomplishments are still in front of you. Press your way to a higher calling in God! Amen!

APPENDIX G

ESTEEMED BLACK MALE PROGRAM

Appendix G
Esteemed Black Male Program

"Maintaining Excellence in the Midst of Mediocrity"

I am certainly grateful to be here this evening and to share in this experience. We have gathered to celebrate the achievement of the African American male. It is without a doubt that men of color need to be celebrated and appreciated. Images of Black males in media and in the news have been distorted for so long that many of the negatives images have been accepted as a truth. They have been perpetuated within our culture, sometimes without even realizing it, such to the point that it becomes necessary to celebrate achievement and highlight success to counter balance the negative images and stereotypes.

It is still a truth that African Americans and particularly African American males have to work twice as hard to prove to the world that we are not as bad as we are supposed to be. From enterprise to finances, from music to education, from the basketball court to the White House and more African American males continue to make major contributions to the American landscape. The definition and the image of black manhood in American is changing!

Intellectuals, those who use thought and reason whether professionally or personally have the power to shape the changing definition and image of black manhood. The one who uses thought and reason has the ability to mediate between the cultural and political sphere that characterizes modern society. There is a black culture beyond Hip Hop! There is a description of black manhood that is beyond the one given to us by the street culture! There is an image of black manhood that contradicts the image that has

been prescribed for us by the dominant culture! So the question becomes, "What is manhood?"

I would image that for most Black men; the true measurement of manhood has been distorted, diminished, dejected and at times discarded. African American males are constantly showered with ideologies that seem to only weaken and detract their minds from true manhood. As a consequence, manhood is measured by ones ability to make a baby, to make a dollar and to make a name. In addition, manhood is understood as ones ability not to tolerate being dissed in any way, shape, form or fashion.

I submit to you that manhood is defined NOT by valuables but by values! Manhood is defined NOT by physical stature by but by the virtues upon which one stands! Manhood is defined NOT by ones ability to repay evil for evil. Rather, true manhood is defined as ones ability to repay evil with love and kindness.

We have come tonight to celebrate those who have dared to set a new standard of excellence! We have come tonight to celebrate those who have not bowed to the negative prescribed stereotypes of black manhood. We celebrate with these brothers who are worthy of admiration and respect. We celebrate the true essence of black manhood. We celebrate with those who are diligent in fulfilling their commitments! We celebrate with those who are marked by integrity! We celebrate with those who mirror what is good, lovely and kind about life and community.

Dr. King once said, "I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word." These words spoke to what Dr. King hoped the future would hold for all Americans, especially African American men. Brotherhood, unconditional love, and truth must remain customary in our culture. We celebrate that tonight.

Yet, even in the midst of celebration there is still work to do. The level of excellence in which we celebrate tonight must be maintained and duplicated in others. So for the next few minutes I would like to talk about maintaining excellence in the midst of mediocrity. One writer said, "mediocrity is the region that is bound on the north by compromise on the south by indecision on the east by past thinking and on the west by lack of vision." The word mediocrity comes from the root word "mediocre." It means, "neither very good or very bad." It is the middle of the road. It means ordinary. Why is that we settle for mediocrity? Why is that we so many people are satisfied with doing just enough to get by?

We should be committed to excellence and always strive to do nothing less than our best. Excellence is a goal worth pursuing. If we are going to be maintain excellence we have to believe that it is time to go to a higher place and that this is the season to press for a higher calling. If we are going to live above mediocrity there are some things we need to do. If we are going to maintain excellence in the midst of mediocrity the first thing we need to do is elevate our pursuits.

People who live above the level of mediocrity have exalted pursuits. They have exalted ambitions. Your life is more than just waking up, getting dressed, going to class or to work, coming home eating dinner, watching a little TV, going to sleep and doing the same thing over again and again. That's mediocre. However, when you elevate your pursuits your thinking about things like, "What's my purpose, what is my passion, what do I believe I'm created to do and who am I created to be." I challenge you to raise your pursuits to a level that will create an eternal significance.

Benjamin Mays, a great preacher and scholar of the twenty century said,

> The tragedy in life does not lie in not reaching your goal. The tragedy lies in having no goal to reach. It isn't a calamity to die will dreams unfilled, but it is a calamity not to dream. It is not disgrace to reach the stars, but it is a disgrace to have no stars to reach for. Not failure, but low aim, is a sin![1]

If we are going to maintain excellence in the midst of mediocrity we need to elevate our pursuits but not only that we need to elevate our self-perceptions. In other words, we need to think better of ourselves. There is an African proverb that says if I can handle the inner enemy those outside of me will be no problem. We have to elevate our self-perceptions. We must think better of ourselves. There is a story in the bible (I'm a preacher; ya'll to know I was going there at some point). There is a story in the book of Numbers in chapter 13 about the children of God in pursuit of their destiny. The story is about them coming out of slavery, with a promise from God, that He will guide them to a promised land, a land flowing with milk and honey. When they get there; Moses, their leader, sends spies out to survey the land and to bring him a report of what they saw. When they surveyed the land and brought the report back to Moses, they said him, "The land is plenteous, it is good land, however, there are giants in the land and we look like grasshoppers our own sight."[2]

They had an exalted pursuit, but because they self-perception had not been exalted they believed that the threats out weighed the opportunities. As a consequence, they spent 40 years, waking up getting dressed, going to work, coming home, watching TV, going to sleep and doing the same thing over and over and over. They made an

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[1]Ignite Your Essence, http://www.igniteyouressence.com/success-quotes/goals/(Accessed 10-23-09).

[2]Num 13:26-33

excuse, "We are like grasshopper in our own sight" and that excuse allowed them to remain mediocre. When we make excuses to remain mediocre we build monuments to nothingness and celebrate incapability. However, when we elevate our self-perceptions we understand that we can do all things! When we elevate our self-perception we understand that the only person that can stop us from being who we are destined to be and created to be is ourselves.

If we are going to maintain excellence in the midst of mediocrity we need to elevate our pursuits, we need to elevate our self-perceptions; we need to elevate our commitment to reciprocate excellence in others. One writer said we are to think about each other and help each other to do good deeds. Valuing others is a way of life for those who desire to maintain excellence in the midst of mediocrity. We are to appreciate others, support others and celebrate others. When you are elevated and educated see that you elevate others and educate others.

Education is an ongoing course of action. In order for you to stay relevant in an every changing climate of society, you must see the continually need to educate yourselves and to educate those around you. The person who operates in a spirit of excellence does not see themselves as a person apart of an aristocracy elite group, where they are better than others. Rather, they see themselves as leaders who are committed to serve others. Knowledge comes with a committee to serve. W.E. Dubois wrote in his essay The Talented Tenth, "All men cannot go to college but some men must; every isolated group or nation must have its yeast." We've come tonight to celebrate our yeast, those who have risen under the heat of mediocrity and are now striving to maintain excellence. While the goal of your education may be to secure wealth, there is another

goal, namely to become educated so that you can lead and serve your community. So then the challenge is not only to elevate your pursuit to eternal significance but to elevate your commitment to reciprocate this notion in the life of others so that the community can be better!

If we are going to maintain excellence in the midst of mediocrity we need to elevate our pursuits, we need to elevate our self-perceptions; we need to elevate our commitment to reciprocate excellence in others and finally we need to elevate our accountability too others. Not only are we to help and serve others, but we are to be accountable to someone. Accountability keeps from being lazy. Accountability keeps us from quitting even when it gets hard! In 1995 Guideposts published the story of Jim Stovall, who became totally blind at age twenty-nine. While he still had partial vision, he volunteered at a school for the blind. He was assigned to a help four-year-old boy, blind and severely handicapped.

Stovall spent considerable time trying to convince the boy he could tie his own shoes or climb stairs in spite of his limitations. "No, I can't!" the boy insisted! "Yes, you can," Stovall replied! "No, I can't!" the verbal battle went on! Meanwhile, Stovall fought his own limitations. Because of his deteriorating vision, he decided he had to quit his college courses. On his way to withdraw from college, he decided to resign his volunteer position as well. "It's just too tough," he explained. "I can't do it." "yes, you can!" said a little voice beside him. IT was the four-year-boy who refused to tie his shoes. "No, I can't!" said Stovall with conviction. "Yes, you can!" Stovall realized if he didn't continue, the child would give up too. So Stovall stayed in school

and graduated three and half years later. The same week he graduated, his little friend tied his shoes and climbed a flight of stairs![3]

They held each other accountable to maintain excellence and refuse to be mediocre! That is the challenge tonight to elevate our pursuits, to elevate our self-perceptions, to elevate our commitment to others and to elevate our willingness to be accountability too others, so that we all can be who we are destined to be.

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[3]Edward K. Rowell,*1001 quotes, Illustrations & Humorous Stories*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2006), 229.

APPENDIX H

PERSONAL ACTION PLAN

APPENDIX H

Personal Action Plan

Vision/Personal mission statement: What does your ideal future look like? Who do you want to be? What do you want to do with your life?

Creating YOUR Action Plan:

An Objective (Attainable & Relevant): What attainable and relevant objective will help you fulfill your vision or personal mission statement?

Goal (SMART): what goal or goals will help you obtain your objective?

How (Specific): How will you obtain your goals? What you are going to do to ensure your goals are reached?

Resources (Specific): What resources will you need to ensure your success?

Who (Specific):

When (Timely):

Results (Measurable):

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